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FEBRUARY 23RD, 1886.

FRANCIS GALTON, Esq., M.A., F.R.S., *President, in the Chair.*

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and signed.

The following presents were announced, and thanks voted to the respective donors :—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

- From the AUTHOR.—The Bushmen and their Language. By G. Bertin, Esq.
 — The recent progress of Obstetric and Gynæcological Medicine. By Thomas More Madden, M.D.
 — Die Masken in der Völkerkunde. By Richard Andree.
 From Messrs. LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.—The Book of Genesis. By François Lenormant. Translated from the French.
 From DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR ANTHROPOLOGIE. Correspondenz-Blatt, 1886. Nos. 1, 2.
 From the SOCIETY.—Mittheilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien. XV Band, 2 Heft.
 — Journal of the Society of Arts. Nos. 1734–1735.
 From the INSTITUTION.—Journal of the Royal United Service Institution. No. 132
 From the EDITOR.—Nature. Nos. 850, 851.
 — Science. Nos. 157.
 — L'Homme, 1886. No. 1.
 — The American Antiquarian, 1886. January.

The election of Dr. H. RAYNER, of the Asylum, Hanwell, was announced.

Mr. JOSEPH THOMSON exhibited a collection of photographs of Africans in the district of the Niger.

The following paper was read by the Secretary :—

On AUSTRALIAN MEDICINE MEN; or, DOCTORS AND WIZARDS OF SOME AUSTRALIAN TRIBES. By A. W. HOWITT, Esq., F.G.S., Cor. Mem. Anth. Institute.

I.

Introduction.

IN these notes on the Doctors and Wizards of some Australian tribes, I deal with instances taken from the Kurnai of Gipps Land, the Murring of Maneroo and the south coast of New South Wales, the Wolgal of the Tumut and Upper Murrumbidgee Rivers, the Wirajuri lower down the latter river to Hay,

the Wotjobaluk of the Wimmera River between Horsham and Mallee Scrubs, north of Lake Hindmarsh, the Jupagalk of the Richardson River and the Woiworung of the Yarra River. It will be seen, therefore, that my facts cover so large a portion of the south-eastern part of Australia that they may not unreasonably be held to apply in all probability, *mutatis mutandis*, to those parts which are left out, as, for instance, part of north-eastern and south-western Victoria. In these notes I have thought it best to record that information which I have collected myself, and to leave the large mass of facts which my correspondents have obligingly contributed as to the magical beliefs and customs which are found in other parts of Australia.

The tribes which I have named above have been the subject of previous memoirs communicated to the Anthropological Institute.

I have adopted the term Medicine Men as a convenient title for this memoir, but the term "Doctor" or "Blackfellow Doctor" is always used in Australia for those men in a native tribe who profess to have supernatural powers. This term is, however, not strictly correct, if by the word "doctor" we mean a person who uses some means for curing diseases. The powers which these men claim are not solely those of healing, nor even those of causing disease, but also such as may be generally spoken of as magical. Thus the doctors are in this sense magicians or wizards. In this paper I shall endeavour to distinguish between doctors and wizards; but I must point out that there are further subdivisions—so that, for instance, the wizards may be either men who profess to perform certain acts upon or for their fellow men (as, for instance, placing them under or relieving them from fatal spells), or men whose magical functions act upon the elements, as, for instance, in producing storm or rain during periods of drought.

I may roughly define doctors as men who profess to extract from the human body foreign substances, which, according to aboriginal belief, have been placed in them by the magic of other doctors, or wizards, or supernatural beings, such as Brewin of the Kurnai, or Ngarang of the Woiworung.

There then remains a class of men who are wizards proper, but who do not all profess to have the same powers or to exercise the same arts, and who may be said to follow different branches of the magical profession. Very near to these are rain-makers, the seers or spirit-mediums, such as the biraark of the Kurnai, and also those bards who employ their poetic faculties for purposes of enchantment—such as the Bunjil Yenjin of the Kurnai tribe.

Some men devote themselves to one branch, some to another,

of the art of magic, and thus arise what would be called amongst us "specialists," such as doctors who especially extract quartz crystals, or wizards who use them to injure other people.

At first sight the subject of these notes may seem to be a simple one, in so far that it might be said that the practices of the "Blackfellow Doctors" are no more than the actions of cunning cheats by which they influence others to their own personal benefit. But on a nearer inspection of the subject it becomes evident that there is more than this to be said. The doctors and wizards believe more or less in their own powers, perhaps because they believe in those of others. The belief in magic in its various forms, in dreams, and in omens and warnings is so universal and is so intimately mingled with the daily life of the aborigines that no one, not even among those men themselves who practise deceit, doubts the powers of the blackfellow doctors, or that if men fail to effect their magical purposes the failure is due to error in the practice, or to the superior strength and power of some adverse wizard.

Allowing for all conscious and intentional deception on the part of the wizard class, there still remains a certain residuum of faith in themselves which requires to be noticed, and if possible to be explained.

It is in this aspect that the question has shown itself most difficult to me. The problem has been, how to separate falsehood from truth, cunning imposture from *bonâ fide* actions, and deliberate falsification from fact. The statements which I have made in these pages are the result of long-continued inquiries as well as personal observation. I must say for my aboriginal informants that I have found them truthful in their statements to me whenever I have been able to check them by further inquiries, and in only one instance did I note any tendency to enlarge the details into proportions beyond their true shape. Even this instance was very instructive. The man's information as to the customs of his tribe, and especially as to the initiation ceremonies, I found to be very accurate, but it was when he began to speak of the powers of the old men of the past generation that I found his colouring too brilliant, and more especially as regarded his tribal father, the last great warrior-magician of the tribe. In his exaggeration of the exploits of these men one might see an instructive example how very soon romance begins to gather in an heroic halo round the memory of the illustrious dead.

II.

The Supernatural Powers claimed by the Doctors and Wizards.

The wizards were everywhere credited with the power of con-

veying themselves through the air, or of being conveyed by the ghosts from place to place, or from earth to sky. Numerous accounts have been given to me by blackfellows of the "going up" of these wizards. As might be expected, it occurred always at night, and the return of the wizard was frequently by means of a tree, down which he was heard to descend and finally to jump on to the ground. At times he returned attended by the ghosts, whose muffled voices and the sound of whose footsteps could be heard by the listening tribespeople. I need not enlarge on this subject here, as I shall have to return to the subject later on.

There is a belief in all the tribes I refer to that men of the wizard or doctor class (and therefore over at least a very large extent of south-eastern Australia) can project substances in an invisible manner against their victims. One of the principal projectiles is said to be *quartz*, especially in its crystallized form. Such quartz crystals are always carried as part of the apparatus of the blackfellow doctor, and are usually carefully concealed from sight, especially of women.

When travelling in the Darling River back country, before it was settled, I saw a very good instance. A blackfellow doctor accompanied me during a day's journey, and alarmed my two black boys by seemingly causing a quartz crystal to pass from his hand into his own body. Such sleight of hand as his is evidently indicated by the account given later on of the manner in which Muri-Kangaroo was trained for a wizard.

These quartz crystals are exhibited by the wizards at the initiation ceremonies. I have described this already elsewhere and need not repeat it.¹ Of all magical substances the crystal of clear and translucent quartz holds the first rank in the estimation of the Australian aborigines. Yet in the central clans of the Kurnai tribe the black stone called *bulk*² is more regarded, and as far as this particular community is concerned, it is only among the Brataua Kurnai and the eastern Krauatun Kurnai, who adjoin the Kulin and Murring tribes respectively, that the quartz crystal is held in dread esteem.

The account which I shall give of the manner in which the Brataua Kurnai named Tankli became a blackfellow doctor brings the belief in the magical powers of the quartz crystal into full view.

Connected with the throwing of magical substances in an invisible form is the belief that they can be caused to enter the body of a victim by burying them in his footsteps, or even in

¹ On Some Australian Ceremonies of Initiation (Journ. Anthropol. Inst., vol. xiii., 1884).

² Kamilaroi and Kurnai, p. 251.

the mark made in the ground by his reclining body. Sharp fragments of quartz, glass, bone, charcoal are thus used, and rheumatic affections are very frequently attributed to them.

Another form of this belief is seen in the practice attributed to the western neighbours of the Woiworung of putting the cone of the *Casuarina quadrivalvis*¹ into a man's fire, so that the smoke might blow into his eyes and cause him to become blind.

In all these tribes a general, I may say almost an universal, practice has been to procure some article belonging to the intended victim. A piece of his hair, some of his fæces, a bone picked by him and dropped, a shred of his opossum rug, or at the present time of his clothes, will suffice, or if nothing else can be got he may be watched until he is seen to spit, when his saliva is carefully picked up with a piece of wood and made use of for his destruction (Wotjobaluk tribe).

The old beliefs are also adapted to their new conditions since the settlement of Australia by the whites. The Woiworung dreaded a practice attributed to the aborigines living about Echuca. It was said that they mixed pounded flesh of a dead man with cut-up tobacco, and offering this to the unsuspecting victim, caused him to fall under the fearful spell of death when he smoked the mixture. The result was believed to be internal swelling of the smoker until death ensued.

There is evidently a belief that doing an act to something which is part of a person, or which even only belongs to him, is in fact doing it to him. This is very clearly brought out by the remark of one of the Wirajuri, who said to me, "You see, when a blackfellow doctor gets hold of something belonging to a man and roasts it with things, and sings over it, the fire catches hold of the smell of the man, and that settles the poor fellow." This belief is evidently world-wide, and has no doubt existed throughout all time of human history. It culminated naturally in the roasting of waxen images, which for aught I know has scarcely yet died out in the British Isles.

The Kurnai practice is to fasten the article to the end of a throwing stick, together with some eaglehawk feathers, and some human or kangaroo fat. The throwing stick is then stuck slanting in the ground before a fire, and it is of course placed in such a position that by-and-by it falls down. The wizard has during this time been singing his charm; as it is usually expressed, he "sings the man's name,"² and when the stick falls

¹ The idea seems to be that the *eidolon* of the hard rough jagged cone will magically produce injury, such as the cone itself might do. This belief points to an attempted explanation of the acute agony of ophthalmia.

² The secrecy with which personal names are often kept from general knowledge, arises out of the belief that an enemy who has your name, has something which he can use magically to your detriment.

the charm is complete. This practice still exists. While writing this paper one of the Kurnai, whom I have elsewhere mentioned,¹ named Tankowilin, came to me to request the loan of a throwing stick which I have, and which is regarded as being of special power, having been used at an initiation ceremony.² He informed me that he wanted it in order to "catch" one of the tribe who had married a relation of his, a widow, without the consent of her kindred, and also far too soon after the death of her husband: indeed, so soon after that it had "made all the poor fellow's friends sad thinking of him." When I refused him the loan of the *mürriwün*, he said it did not matter, for that he and his friends had made "a very strong stick to point at him with by singing his name over it, and spitting strong poison over it."

The sense of the word poison as used here is not as we use it, but means "magic," or it might be expressed by the word "medicine," as applied among the North American Indians.

*The Gūliwill.*³—A good illustration of the practice of roasting things is afforded by the Wotjobaluk tribe, and which will also serve for their neighbours, the Jupagalk, and the more distant Wirajuri. The only difference in practice is that with most tribes the article is roasted attached to a throwing stick, while Wotjobaluk use a peculiar apparatus called a *gūliwill*, and the Jupagalk a "yamstiek."

The *gūliwill* consisted of several small spindle-shaped pieces of Casuarina wood, on which marks were made, such as the effigy of the victim, and one of the poisonous snakes. These *gūliwill* were tied up tightly together with human fat and the article obtained from the intended victim, and then roasted for a long time, or several times at intervals. After the whites settled the country at the Wimmera river, the Wotjobaluk, who were

¹ Kamilaroi and Kurnai, p. 247.

² The Jeraeil of the Kurnai tribe. It is interesting to note that the throwing stick (*mürriwün*) is supposed to have inherent magical powers. It is not necessary to anoint it with fat, human or animal, as is the case with spears or clubs. I think the idea may be traced to the difference between throwing a spear by hand and throwing it by means of the *mürriwün*. The blackfellow perceives that the *mürriwün* gives the spear a surprising impetus, and not being able to explain its mechanical action, he considers that it is magical. This is a good instance of the manner in which the aboriginal mind works.

³ Apparently from *Gūli*=rage, anger, and not from *Gūli* or *Kūli*=man; as an example, the following:—

Gūli-yan, I am enraged.

Gūli-yara, thou art enraged.

Gūli-ya, he is enraged.

Gūli-yangal, we (two) are enraged.

Gūli-yangno, we (all) are enraged.

Gūli-yangwūl, you (two) are enraged.

Gūli-yau-woijawot, you (all) are enraged.

employed on the stations, as I am told, found the great chimneys of the huts, especially of that used as a kitchen, unrivalled places in which to hang their *gūliwill*, so as to expose them to prolonged heat.

The following account was given me of the effects produced by such a *gūliwill*, or the belief in it, which is much the same thing. "Sometimes a man dreams that some one has got some of his hair or a piece of his food, or of his 'possum rug, or indeed anything almost that he has used. If he dreams this several times he feels sure of it and calls his friends together, and tells them that he is dreaming too much about 'that man,' who must have something belonging to him. Sometimes the suspected *bangal* (wizard) being spoken to admits that he has something that he is burning, but excuses himself by saying that it was given him to burn, but that he did not know to whom it belonged. In such a case he would give the thing back, telling the sick man's friends to put it in water, so as to wash the fire out. In such cases the sick man would feel cooled, and most likely get well!"

There was the same belief in the tribes to the eastward of the Wimmera river: for instance, the Jupagalk; but the *bangal*, instead of using a *gūliwill*, tied the objects by a string to a yamstick stuck before a fire, and when the cord was burned and they fell the charm was complete.

The omental fat.—Of all the arts attributed to the wizards, that which was perhaps the most dreaded was the abstraction of a man's fat. This is usually spoken of by the whites as the taking of kidney-fat.¹ This belief is a very widespread one. It is not confined to those parts of south-eastern Australia to which these notes refer, but is found throughout the continent in so many places that I believe it to be universal. The Murring, Ngarego, Theddora (of Omeo), Wolgal and Wirajuri called this practice by some form of the word *būkin* or *būgin*. The Kurnai call it *brét-būng*, or "with the hand." The men who practised it were called *būra-būrūk* or "flying," or also *brét-būng mūngar-wārūgi*, or "with the hand from a long distance." They were believed to throw their victim into a magical state by pointing at him with the *Yertūng*, which is a bone instrument made of the fibula of a kangaroo.

In the Kurnai tribe, men have died believing themselves to

¹ So far as I know, there is no "kidney fat" in man, as there is, for instance, in the sheep. The only fat near to the kidney seems to be in the folds of the peritoneum on which it rests, as on a cushion, or fatty substance, as the suprarenal capsules, which, however, are quite insignificant. The position in which the victim is, as it seems, laid on his back, and the situation of the incision in front and just below the ribs, clearly indicate the omentum as the source of the fat taken.

have been deprived of their fat, there being no signs of violence whatever on their bodies. At the same time there is no doubt that the fat-taking was actually practised. An informant, on whom I can fully rely,¹ tells me that when a boy he saw two old men secretly roasting and eating fat taken from a dead blackfellow, and they observed to him that now they would have the strength of the other man.

The effect of dreams, wherein the sleeper believed that he had fallen into the hands of such wizards may be imagined, and it is indicated by my Woiworung informant, who, speaking to me on this subject said, "Sometimes men only know about having their fat taken out by remembering something of it as in a dream."

I have said that the Murring called the fat-takers *bukin*. The belief extended with the same name in dialectic forms across the Maneroo tableland to Omeo and down the Murray and Murrumbidgee waters. The Wirajuri greatly dread the *būgin* and their practices, and attribute to them all kinds of supernatural powers. They are generally believed to be the wizards of neighbouring tribes. They are supposed to carry an instrument made of the pointed leg-bone (*fibula*) of a kangaroo, having attached to it a long cord of twisted sinews, ending in a loop. Watching until the victim sleeps, the wizard is supposed to creep to him, pass the bone under his knees, round his neck, through the looped end of the cord, and thus having secured his victim, to carry him away to extract his fat. How this is done will be seen by the account given to me by a Jupagalk man.

The *būgin* is believed to walk invisible, to turn himself at will into an animal, as for instance a kangaroo. My Wirajuri informant, in speaking to me of the *būgin*, of whom he expressed great dread, said as follows, "If I saw an old man kangaroo come up hopping close and sit and stare at me, I should keep my eyes fixed upon him, and try to get out of his way, lest he might be a *būgin*, who, getting behind me, would take me at a disadvantage."

Moreover, the *būgin*, when hardly pressed, is believed to be able to turn himself into a stump or a log, or even to go down into the ground out of sight—and thus escape his pursuers. A very dangerous practice attributed to the *būgin* is to get inside of a tree, and then, when a blackfellow is climbing it, to cause a limb, of which he has laid hold, to break off suddenly, so that he falls to the ground, and becomes an easy victim.

When the Wirajuri feels his flesh twitch he knows that a *būgin* is near; and thus is of the opinion of the second witch in

¹ Mr. James McAlpine, of Tarraville.

“Macbeth,” who says, “by the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes.”

Crossing from the Lower Murrumbidgee and the Murray rivers to the Wimmera, about Lake Hindmarsh we find the same belief in full force. Here is the account of the fat-taking powers of the Wotjobaluk wizards as given to me by one of the old men of the tribe.

The favourite plan is the usual practice of sneaking upon the victim when asleep. Or the *banggal* (wizard), if he is acquainted with his intended victim, manages to arrive at his camp so late as to be asked to remain all night. Pretending himself to sleep, he watches until his host is in sound slumber, when he passes his fatal “*yūlo*”¹ under his knees, round his neck, and through the loop, and so carries him a little way from the camp.

The old man also gave me an account of the manner in which the fat was always taken, whether the victim were noosed by the *yūlo*, or knocked down by a blow of the *brépent*² on the back of the neck. The victim was laid upon his back, and the wizard, sitting astride of his chest, cut him open on the right side, below the ribs, and thence extracted the fat.³ Then bringing the edges of the cut together, and singing his spell, he bit them to make them join, so that no scar should be visible. Then he retired to a distance, leaving the man lying on his back. He sings a song, which causes the victim to rouse up, and stagger about, wondering how he came to be “sleeping out there.” This proceeding is called *déking-ngálūk*, or “open-side.”

If the victim were a stranger, the wizard would not take so much trouble, but would leave him lying. If he be some one he knows, he does as above related, and moreover he is careful, when laying him out preparatory to operating upon him, to place him in that direction in which the dead of his *totem* are buried.⁴

The Mükjarawent, a tribe which adjoined the Wotjobaluk to the south, had a similar belief as to the fat-taking wizards. The account given to me of their proceedings was almost identical with that just noted, the only difference being, that unless the *banggal* takes precautions, the victim will follow him when he recovers his senses. He therefore hides until he sees him rise

¹ *Yūlo* = bone.

² *Brépent* is a club with a knot at one end.

³ The position in which the victim is here laid shows, as previously stated, that it is the omental fat which is taken.

⁴ The Wotjobaluk have six principal *totems* arranged under two principal classes, Krokitch and Gamutch. Each *totem* has a particular direction in which its members are buried. For instance, *Wártwūt* (hotwind) with the head a little to the west of north, that is, in the direction from which the hot wind blows in their country. *Gnávi-ngagūli* (belonging to the sun) to the east, that is, towards the sunrise; and so on with the others all round the compass.

and stagger towards him, when he turns him away homewards by throwing some earth at him.

The time which will elapse before the victim dies is fixed by the wizard walking along the nearest fallen tree trunk. Its length in strides fixes the number of days he has to live. The victim going home feels ill, does not know what is the matter with him, but by-and-by, just before he dies, he dreams of the man, or of the men, if there were more than one, who have taken his fat, and so is able to tell his friends, who make up a party to revenge him.

This belief in a sort of clairvoyance just before death seems to be very general among the aborigines. I have found it in the Wirajuri, where a man, just before his death, said to his friends who were standing round him, "Go on one side, so that I may be able to see who it is that has caught me."

It occurs in Gippsland also. A few years ago one of the Kurnai died from the effects partly of drinking and partly of exposure. When so near death that he was lying speechless in his camp, his great friend Tankowilin, whom I have before mentioned, besought him earnestly to tell him who it was that had caused his death, and was inconsolable because the sick man died without being able to tell him.

The belief in the abstraction of fat by wizards, and its magical powers, was also held by the Jupagalk. An account has been given me by a very intelligent man of this tribe of what he saw as a boy. His account is as follows:—

"When I was a boy about ten years old I went out one day with some of the men to hunt. We were all walking in a line, when one of them hit the man in front of him on the back of the neck with his club and knocked him down. Two or three of the men held me tight, so that I could not run away, for I was very frightened. Then the man cut open the one he had knocked down, by a little hole in his side below the ribs, and took out his fat. After that he bit the two edges of the cut together and sang a song to make them join, but he could not succeed. He then said that he could not do this because someone had already taken this man's fat before, as he could see by the marks upon his liver, and that whenever a man had been opened and closed up no one could do it again. As they could not wake the man up they buried him. They smoked the fat over a fire, and took it away tightly wrapped up in a cloth. They wanted it to carry with them to make them lucky in hunting."

The Yūlo.—The bone instrument, which I have several times mentioned, was also used in all the tribes for other magical purposes, as, for instance, injuring people by pointing it at them

from a distance, when, as in the case of the quartz crystal, it was supposed to enter them and produce death.

The Wotjobaluk called it, when used in this way, *yūlo-witchinwelli*,¹ or "the flying *yūlo*," because it was not only pointed, but also magically thrown at a person. The wizard having sneaked to such a distance that he could see his victim's camp fire, and thus distinguish him by its light, was supposed to swing the *yūlo* round his head and launch it at him. The *yūlo* was believed to dart into the victim invisibly, and then compel him to come out to the wizard, who, throwing him over his shoulder, carried him off.

A Jupagalk man explained the way in which this kind of *yūlo* was made magically powerful. In his tribe it was called *yūlo*, and the practice was called *wónjerŭp*, or "pointing." The *yūlo*, or bone, was the fibula of a kangaroo, pointed at one end, and having at the other the sinews still attached, out of which—and strips of human skin taken from a corpse—a cord was twisted. The instrument, when completed, was about twelve inches in length, and the cord thirty-six inches. To render it deadly, it was smeared with the fat of the corpse from which the skin was taken, and with the juices dropping from the stage upon which the corpse was laid to dry.² The instrument was rubbed with ruddle.

As in the Wotjoballuk belief, here also the wizard was thought to swing the *yūlo-jinert*³ round his head, and then launch it at his victim. People who fell ill were often asked by their friends, "Have you not dreamed of the man who has pointed the bone at you?"

The belief that a victim could be caused to leave his camp by means of the "flying *yūlo*" is paralleled by the belief of the Kurnai that men called *bunjil barn* could cause their victims to walk to them by reason of their enchantments. I have described these at length elsewhere,⁴ and need only add here that the pieces of wood from which they received their name were in shape like the *gūliwil* of the Wotjobaluk, and, like them, made of the Casuarina. Their magic fire round which they danced, singing the name of their intended victim, is exactly the magic fire (*tálmarū*) of the Murring initiation ceremonies, and the *bunjil barn* being rubbed over with charcoal, followed the custom of the initiation.

The Lesser Magic Familiars.—The doctors or wizards, of whose

¹ *Yūlo* = bone, *witchin* = feather.

² The first witch in "Macbeth" also believed in the magical power of "grease that sweaten from the murderer's gibbet."

³ *Jinert* = sinew.

⁴ Kamilaroi and Kurnai, p. 252.

practices against mankind I have now given some account, were the greater practitioners of magic, but there were also men who practised the lesser magic. These are credited with magical powers less in degree and usually different in kind from those of the doctors and wizards whom I have described.

I take an instance from the Kurnai. One of the Brataua clan dreamed several times that he had become a lace lizard,¹ and as such had assisted at a "corroboree" of those reptiles. Thus as it was believed, he acquired power over them, and he had actually a tame lace lizard in his camp, while his wife and children lived apart in a camp close by. The lizard accompanied him wherever he went, sitting on his shoulders, or partly on his head, and people believed that it informed him of danger, assisted him in tracking his enemies or young couples who had eloped, and, in fact, was his friend and protector. As might have been expected, people also believed that he could send his familiar lizard at night to injure people in their camps while they slept. In consequence of this comradeship with lace lizards, and probably because he was in some manner one of them, he received the name of Bunjil Bataluk.

I remember, many years ago, before I took any critical notice of these aboriginal beliefs, that there was an old Bidweli woman who was much feared because she had a tame native cat which she carried about with her, and which was believed to injure people during sleep at her wish.

Rainmakers.—Rainmakers and weather-changers must not be forgotten in an account of the lesser magic of these tribes. In Gippsland the rainmakers were not usually benevolent individuals who called up refreshing rains after periods of drought as did their analogues in the dry northern districts, but malicious persons who raised storms of wind and rain and floods which did injury and prevented the Kurnai from following their daily vocations in hunting and fishing.

These rainmakers were called *Bunjil-Willüŋ*,² and it is said of them as of the other Kurnai wizards, that they obtained their powers during dreams. I have before spoken of one of the Braiaka headmen who was credited with the power of calling up the furious west wind, whence he derived his name Bunjil-Kraura.³ He, as all others of these men, used songs,

¹ *Hydrosaurus varius*, commonly called the Iguana, called by the Kurnai *bátalük*. Mr. McAlpine remembers the man here spoken of well. He describes him as a very reserved, quiet-tempered man, who kept very much to himself. He had a great reputation for magical powers, and was the father of the Tankli spoken of in this paper.

² *Willüŋ* = rain. The Kurnai say that the frogs, when croaking in chorus in the swamps, are "singing for the rain," and that the big sonorous bull-frogs are the *Bungil Willüŋ*.

³ Kamilaroi and Kurnai, p. 211.

which were often accompanied by some expressive pantomime. One of the well-remembered *Bunjil-Willäng* of the Brataua clan used to call up storms of wind and rain by filling his mouth with water and squirting it out towards the west, from which quarter the storms came in Western Gippsland. This he did to aid the charm which he sang. Even women acquired these powers, and there is now an old dame who has a great reputation for calming the storms by her songs, which speak of the furious winds blowing the leaves off the trees.

Each Kurnai clan had a direction from which its *Bunjil-Willäng* called up rains. The Brataua and Braiaka sang towards the west or south-west, the Tatung to the south, and the Brabra and the Krauatun to the south-east. The fact is that from these quarters come the prevalent rains which fall on the country of the clans named. Thus, when a westerly rain fell over the Brabra country, it was said that the Braiaka *Bunjil-Willäng* had sent it, and so on with the others.

It was also thought that the *Bunjil-Willäng* could bring or send thunder. Morgan, the headman of the Brataua clan, was a *Bunjil-Willäng* as well as in other respects a powerful wizard, and could, they thought, bring thunder at will.

By reason of this power, and on account of his deep growling voice, he received also the name of Bunjil-Gwórun.¹

Another instance of the beliefs as to rainmakers will suffice. Among the Wotjobaluk these men were not necessarily *bangal*; in fact, as I learn, few of them were. The offices were distinct. In order to produce rain he took a bunch of his own hair which he carried about with him for the purpose. Soaking it in water he sucked the moisture out and then squirted it to the westward. Or he twirled the ball round his head so that the water flowed out like rain. In this arid district the office of rainmaker was much thought of.

The Yenjin, one of the most curious practices of the lesser magic I have found in the Kurnai tribe, seems so far as I yet know to have been peculiar to them. The men who practised it were called *Bunjil-Yenjin*.² The *Yenjin* is a song peculiar to elopement, as the *Gūnyeru* is a song which accompanied dances.

¹ *Gwórun*=thunder. The Kurnai had a curious belief about thunder. The Spiny Ant-eater (*Echidna hystrix*) is said by them to be the *Gueabün* (wife's mother) of the thunder, and that in consequence whenever it hears the voice of the thunder (its daughter's husband) it endeavours to hide itself by burrowing in the ground. It is also interesting to note, as showing how beliefs in tribes far apart are connected, that the Woiworung, who believed that thunder was something which came from the *Tharangalk*, the country beyond the sky, for the purpose of smashing up trees, also thought that the *Echidna* had command over it, for they have a legend of how Bunjil ordered it to smash up a rock with its thunder within which a stolen child had been hidden.

² In the Nülit dialect this was softened to *Yenin*.

There are now no *Bunjil-Yenjin* among the Kurnai, and probably the office has been vacant for over twenty years. Before that time there was at least one in each division of the tribe. Some men were more celebrated than others, and of them Morgan whom I have just mentioned had a great name.¹

The following account is derived from the statements of the Kurnai and partly also from those of two old residents of Gippsland, who in the early days were, as boys, much with the blacks in their camps, and thus observed and now remember many practices which are now obsolete.²

It seems from these statements that almost the last time when the *Bunjil-Yenjin* exercised their office on a large scale was at the holding of a *Jeraeil*,³ on the south side of Lake Wellington, about 20 to 25 years ago. At it ten or a dozen young couples "ran off" under the influence of love and the songs of the *bunjil-yenjin*. Some few of the people who were there are still living, and from them, and especially from one woman who was a girl at that time and who then "ran off" with her future husband, I have received very full accounts of what was done.

The substance of these statements is as follows. It was the business of a *bunjil-yenjin* to aid the elopement of young couples. For instance, when a young man wanted a wife and had fixed his mind upon some girl whom he could not obtain from her parents, he must either go without her, persuade her to run off, or call in the aid of the *bunjil-yenjin*. In this latter case he retained him by presents of weapons, rugs, &c. The *bunjil-yenjin* then lay down in or near the encampment, next to him was the young man, beyond him his comrades. The *bunjil-yenjin* then sang his song and the others all joined in with him.⁴ The following is one of the songs, of which there are very many, used on such occasions, and it is said to have been a most powerful one. My Kurnai informant, whose wife had been one of the girls who eloped at the *Jeraeil* I have mentioned, said, in speaking of it, "That *yenjin* made the women run in all directions when they heard it."

Bára-bürni.

Roll up the twine.

*Wángür.*⁵

jaw.

molla.

down there.

¹ Mr. McAlpine remembers that Morgan was one of the great singers of the tribe.

² Mr. J. McAlpine, of Tarraville, and Mr. W. Lucas, of Woodside.

³ Initiation ceremony.

⁴ Mr. McAlpine remembers, as a boy, hearing these songs on several occasions, and seeing girls going about the camp covering their ears with their hands. In answer to his inquiries these damsels said that the young men wanted them to run off, but that they did not want to do so.

⁵ *Wángür*=the Jaw, the girl's name. The name of course varies in each application of the charm.

<i>tallo-burni.</i> little twine.	<i>tallo.</i> little.	<i>káragan.</i> sweetheart.
<i>ngella gállí.</i> I go first.	<i>karnang.</i> the hollow (to).	
<i>góla.</i> before.	<i>yinna.</i> you.	

This performance—ceremony it might even be called—was well known to all in the camp, for there was no concealment, and if done at any little distance there was always some female friend of the girl—some “sister, or a cousin, or an aunt”—to carry her the news and say, “So-and-so is singing a *yenjin* about you.”

When the *bunjil-yenjin* thought his spell strong enough, he ceased his song. In one case, where Mr. Lucas was present, Morgan was the *bunjil-yenjin*, and the girl’s parents covered themselves up with their rugs as if asleep.

Before, however, the youth could avail himself of the spell thus cast upon his “little sweetheart” something more had to be done, and probably in the case mentioned by Mr. Lucas it preceded the covering up of the parents. Another wizard had to use his art to send them asleep. In the case of the *Jeracil* which I have mentioned, this man was the renowned Bunjil Dáuangŭn,¹ and his proceeding was as follows:—Being paid by the youth with weapons and ’possum rugs, he stuck his magical throwing stick in the ground, slanting towards the camp of the parents, and with such an inclination that after a time it would fall down. By its side he placed his *bulk*,² and at a little distance his *yertŭng*,³ and beside it his *gŭmbart*.⁴ He then sang his song, and when the throwing stick fell the charm was complete, and the parents supposed to be wrapped in a magical sleep.

The youth might now run off with his sweetheart, but only after a formality which shows that the final choice rested with her. Stealing round to the back of her parents’ camp, in which she was sitting, he touched her with a long stick, and she being ready to run off, pulled the end as a signal. The young man then left, and the girl having packed up her bag (*batŭng*)—in fact, having her trousseau ready—flitted after him.

In this case which I am now describing the proceedings were not yet over. After a time, according to my informant, the old people woke up, and finding their daughter gone, the old man

¹ Kamilaroi and Kurnai, p. 211.

² Kamilaroi and Kurnai, p. 251.

³ A small instrument made of Kangaroo bone, in some respects the analogue of the *yŭlo*.

⁴ The bone nose peg.

summoned his kindred¹ to assist him in singing a song which was believed would cause the youth's legs to become so weary that he would not be able to make his escape. Finally, the father took his *müriwün* (throwing stick), and, holding it loosely in his right hand, made blows with it towards different points of the horizon. When it gave a sound like a crack it indicated the direction in which search after the runaways was to be made.

Mr. Lucas tells me that he remembers being present when a couple, who had run off by means of a *bunjil-yenjin*, voluntarily returned after a time. One of the old women went out of the camp and brought them in. Mr. Lucas is not aware what was done to them, excepting that the young man had afterwards to stand out and submit to an ordeal of weapons of some kind.²

III.

The Wizard as a Healer.

I have now spoken at some length of the manner in which the blackfellow doctors have been accustomed, according to the belief of the aborigines, to work ill upon them. It remains to show these men in a somewhat more favourable light, as alleviating suffering and shielding their friends from the machinations of enemies or revenging those who had fallen victims to other wizards.

One of the special functions of the blackfellow doctors is to counteract the effect of spells wrought by others of their own class.

Their method of procedure is so common among savage tribes, and has so often been described that it may be dismissed with a few words. The cure is effected by sucking the affected part

¹ Descent with the Kurnai is in the male line. There are certain animal names, Sea Salmon, Wambat, which go from father to children, and probably represent former *totems*.

² Many other particulars might be added, bearing upon the subject of marriage by elopement as practised by the Brataua Kurnai, and as witnessed by Mr. McAlpine in the early years of settlement in Gippsland. But these statements would be foreign to the purpose of this paper. Those which I have given are connected with the Lesser Magic, and they fully confirm all I have elsewhere said as to elopement having been one of the recognised forms of marriage with the Kurnai. The old people in the case of the *yenjin* winked at the elopement, and yet punished the principal actors in it when they returned. I am now satisfied that the explanation of this extraordinary state of affairs is to be sought for in the restriction upon marriage which was produced by the combined action of the widespreading archaic system of Kurnai kinships and the prohibition of marriage within the local groups.

The prohibition arising thus from the prohibited degrees, and from locality, rendered it next to impossible for a man to find any woman who was not in some way related to him in such a manner as to become forbidden to him as a wife. Consent of parents and relatives could only be obtained in the rarest cases, hence recourse was had to the only possible alternative, namely elopement, and the office of the *bunjil-yenjin* arose in time to lend a sanction to the proceedings.

and exhibiting, as having been extracted therefrom, some foreign body which had caused the ill; or by sucking the place and expelling the evil influence as a mouthful of wind; or by various manipulations, pinchings, squeezings, to allay the pain. In some cases the "poison" as they call it now, is supposed to be extracted through a string, or a stick from the patient to the doctor, who spits it out in the form of blood.

Charms are also sung to cure people. A very good instance occurred at the Jeraeil which I attended in February, 1884. One evening I heard a most extraordinary song proceeding from the camp of the second headman, Tulaba. I found him driving away pains which were troubling his old wife. He told me that he was singing a very powerful song which his father had lately taught him while he slept. The words are as follows, with a most extraordinary emphasis, when sung, upon the last word.

<i>Minyan</i>	<i>būlūnma</i>	<i>nāranke</i>
Show	belly	moon to.

As an illustration of the methods generally used, I can give the case of the Kurnai, Tankli, the son of the lace lizard man. His method of cure was to stroke the affected part with his hands until, as he said, he could "feel the thing under the skin." Then covering the place with a piece of cloth, he drew it together with one hand, and unfolding it, exhibited within its folds a piece of quartz, bone, bark, charcoal, even in one case a glass marble, as the cause of the disease. The use of the cloth is evident to any one but a blackfellow.

The curative powers of the wizards were, however, in many cases of a much higher order. The following account was given of a celebrated wizard of the Jupagalk by one of the men who was present, and I subjoin it as nearly in his own words as possible.

"A blackfellow was very bad, and about dusk King Barney came to see him. At dark he went off for a time. By and by we saw a light afar off, and as it seemed above the tree tops, it looked first like a star in the east. Then it went round to the west and kept coming nearer and nearer. At last we saw the *bangal* walking along the ground carrying a piece of burning rag in his hand. His legs were covered with something like feathers which could be seen by the fire-light, and the people said it was the 'bangal's feathers.' He sate down by the poor fellow, saying he had been over to the Avoca River, where he found a man who had the rag tied on a yamstick roasting it before the fire. He then rubbed the place where the man was sick and sucked out of it some pieces of stone and glass. The man then soon got better."

In this tribe when a man died it was the office of the *banggal* to go out with the relatives and watch at the grave, for it was believed that during the night the spirit of the wizard who had killed him would come and peep at the grave out of the bushes. He having thus been seen by the *banggal*, the relatives of the deceased were in a position to have revenge.

The Woiworung Wirarap.

In the Woiworung tribe the wizards (*wirarap*) besides making use of the ordinary curative processes which I have mentioned, practised also their art in extracting quartz crystals which were believed to have been projected by other wizards or doctors or by the supernatural being called Ngarang. The quartz crystal was believed to be projected in the form of a small dust whirlwind against the victim. In describing this, my informant Barak said as follows: "The man being struck felt cold, suffered pains all over him, then shortness of breath. Some wirarap seeing him might say 'Hallo! there is a lot of *mūng* (magic) in you.' The cure was for several wirarap to watch the man until they saw the *mūng* escaping like a little dust whirlwind from him.¹ It was then going back to its owner, and the wirarap would run after it and the one that caught it would break a little bit off so that it could not leave him any more. Then he would put it in his bag with his other things."

When a person believed himself to be under some spell by a person who had got something belonging to him, his resource was to the wirarap. That which was thus acted upon was called *yarūk*. He might suspect that some harm was impending over him by having a dream, for instance, of a kangaroo hopping towards him, and if he then became ill he would consult the wizard. My informant gave me this as an illustration:—"The Wirarap looking at him might say, 'Yes! the fire is up so high (pointing to his waist). It is well you came to me in time, for the next time they burned that thing belonging to you it would be up so high (pointing to his neck) and then you would be done for.' The wizard was then supposed to go to the place where the culprit lived, the next time the wind blew from it. He would go through the air to the place where the *yarūk* was concealed, pull up the throwing stick with it attached and bring it back. Giving the *yarūk* to the sick man, he would say to him something like this, 'You go and put this in a running stream to wash all the *mūng* out of it, and I will go up aloft and put this throwing-stick in some water up there.'"

¹ *Brewin* of the Kurnai is supposed to travel in such little whirlwinds. I have heard the Kurnai say, when seeing such a little spiral of dust and leaves in the forest, "Get out of the way, there is *Brewin* coming."

The functions of the wirarap related also to the cause of death in so far that it was his office to inform the relatives of the deceased who had been the aggressor. In order to do this he watched by the grave in order to see the spirit or "wraith" of a culprit sneaking round to see where his victim had been buried. When no wizard was available, the relatives in digging the grave, sought for some worm-hole, or grub-hole in it, and having found one poked a small stick or straw down it and by the inclination learned the direction in which to seek the culprit.

The power of the wirarap extended not only to the cure of afflicted persons and to the discovery of the person who had caused death by magic, but also, in some instances, at least to the bringing back of the departed spirit. Such a man is said to have been the Wirarap Doro-bauk,¹ who lived near Mt. Macedon. The following account was given me by a Woiworong man who was present.

"Soon after the white men came to Melbourne, a blackfellow, near where Heidelberg now is, was very nearly dead. His friends sent for Doro-bauk, who, on his arrival found the man only just breathing the least possible, and his *mūrūp* (ghost-spirit) had gone away from him. Nothing remained but a little wind. Doro-bauk went after the *mūrūp*, and by-and-by returned with it under his opossum rug. He said he had been just in time to catch it round the middle before it got near to the *karalk*.² The dead man was still breathing a little wind when Doro-bauk laid himself down upon him and put the *mūrūp* back into him. After a time the man came back to life."

The wirarap also in this tribe exercised supervision over the youth who had been made *jibauk* (initiated). He could dream of their actions. But the novice was also under supernatural penalties if he broke the food laws or rules of conduct laid upon him. Thus the Kulin of the Goulburn River, who were the neighbours of the Woiworong, and nearly allied to them, believed that if the novice ate the spiny ant-eater or the black duck, he would be killed by the thunder.³ If he ate of the female of the opossum or native bear, he was liable to fall when climbing

¹ *Doro*=a grub. *Bauk*=high up.

² *Karalk* is the bright colour of sunset, and is said to be caused by the spirits of the dead going into and out of *Ngámat*. *Ngámat* is the receptacle of the sun beyond the western edge of the earth. It seems that the dead do not remain permanently in *Ngámat*, for they are spoken of as returning, and are then spoken of as *Ngamajet*. The white men were also called *Ngamajet*. The Kulin of the Western Port District, neighbours of the Woiworong, used the word *Taringūra* as the equivalent of *Karalk*. This is explained to me as being also the word applied to a place on fire, as for instance an incandescent hole in the ground, out of which a tree stump has been burned, such as may be seen after any bushfire.

³ See footnote, p. 35.

trees, and so on for other similar offences. If the novice fell ill, and his conscience pricked him, his only chance of safety would be to present himself to the wizard or doctor.¹ My informant said that something as follows would occur: "The wirarap looking steadily at the boy, would say, 'There is a lot of *mūng* (magic) in you!' After a pause he would commence to rub the youth's leg, and after a little more time produce a small young 'possum and say, 'This has happened to you because you have been eating 'possum too soon.'"

Precisely similar supervision is exercised by the wizards of the other tribes after initiation over the novices.

I have before mentioned that the Woiworung believed that men could be injured by an evil being called *Ngarang*, which is in this analogous to *Brewin* of the Kurnai; but the latter lived in the sky, while the former was thought to live in the mounds of earth which are so often to be seen around the swollen stems of great forest trees. The *Ngarang* was described as being like a man with a big beard and hairy arms and hands. They came out at night in order to cast things at men passing incautiously. Their magic acted by making the victim lame. The wirarap was, however, superior, for he could extract these substances by his art, as quartz, bone, wood, or other rubbish. Of course, the *Ngarang* was invisible to all but the wirarap.

The Murring Gommeras.

Among the Murring of the coast, the wizards (*gommara*) were the principal men, and in this the Murring differed somewhat from the Kurnai and the Woiworung, and probably from other tribes among those I have mentioned.

I have before said that the Kurnai headmen were not necessarily doctors or wizards. For instance, the principal man of the northern section of the Kurnai, when Gippsland was settled by the whites, was one Bruthen Munji,² who was a fighting man and orator. It is said of him as showing his eminence as a warrior, that he had been known to run down a straggling Brajerak blackfellow, and hold him until his brother Bembinkel came up and knocked him on the head. With the Woiworung, according to my informant, Barak, the headmen were those old

¹ Mr. McAlpine, whom I have already mentioned, tells me that about 1856-57 he had a black boy in his employment. The lad was strong and healthy, until one day, when Mr. McAlpine found that he was ill. He explained that he had been doing what he ought not to have done, that he had "stolen some female opossum" before he was permitted to eat it; that the old men had found it out, and that he should never grow up to be a man. In fact, he lay down under the belief, so to say, and never got up again, and died within three weeks.

² Kamilaroi and Kurnai, p. 212.

men who "spoke straight and did not injure people."¹ The wirarap might be a headman, but was not necessarily such. With the Murring, on the contrary, the headman must also be a wizard. This comes out clearly in considering what the gommeras and their powers were.

The power of a gommera was very great before the disorganization of the Murring tribes, although even now he directs and is obeyed. He was the headman and wizard combined. He was the *biamban*, or master, of all the people of the local group to which he belonged.² The oldest gommera was the *biamban* of the other gommeras, who obeyed his directions. He directed the proceedings of the *Bunan* and the *Kwringal* (initiation ceremonies), and to judge from the one I have seen, maintained a certain reserve and kept himself somewhat apart as being superior. To be a "real gommera," a man must have certain qualifications. He must be grey-headed, must speak several dialects, or even languages, he must be skilful in arms, and above all he must be able to "bring things up out of himself."³ At the initiations, where the wizards exhibit their powers, sometimes singly, sometimes all together, the substances which they "bring up," and exhibit held between their teeth, are quartz crystals, or pieces of veinquartz, pieces of blackstone, white substances (pipe clay, &c.), lengths of fresh intestine, pieces of flesh, bone, &c. The accounts given of the Gommeras of the past generation, say thirty years ago, if fairly trustworthy, show that they were more clever than the men now living. One man was described to me as having attended a great *Bunan*,⁴ coming from Braidwon, who protruded from his mouth, while performing his magical dance, a black substance about the size of a hand, which hung down from his mouth, and could be withdrawn and again protruded. It was believed that by exhibiting this to his enemies he could render their sight dim, and then go up and knock them on the head with ease. At the same *Bunan* it is said that another, during the dance at which the *totem* name, meaning "Brown Snake," is shouted, produced out of his mouth a small live brown snake, which his tribesmen believed

¹ Buckley says: "by my harmless and peaceable manner amongst them, I had acquired great influence in settling their disputes. Numbers of murderous fights I had prevented by my interference."—Morgan's "Life of Buckley," p. 101.

² In these tribes the local organization had superseded the social organization. The totems had lost their prominence and had sunk into "magical names" rather than names connected with descent.

³ This expression refers to the belief that the wizards keep their magical substances "in stock," so to say, within themselves, and can at will bring them up out of their interiors, so as to produce them from their mouths.

⁴ The *Bunan* is the complete ceremony of initiation, at which a circular mound of earth is made, within which some of the ceremonies take place.

to be what we may call his "familiar." A third gommera is said to have brought up a number of minute crystals of quartz, which, being dropped from his mouth into a wooden bowl, were given to the novices to swallow, in order that these crystals might "breed" inside them, and thus in time make them "clever men."

The gommeras were believed to go up aloft by threads, and this also applies to the wizards of the Maneroo Murring, the Ngarego, the Wolgal, and the Theddora of Omeo.

The ghosts were also, as elsewhere, in communication with the gommeras.

It seems to have been a favourite practice of the gommeras until quite recently to leave things lying about the *kuringal* (initiation) grounds. The general belief is that these are the substances which they can project into people, such as quartz, bone, &c. From one case which was related to me, it seems, however, most probable that they actually did leave sharp pieces of bone, which may have been poisoned. In the case I refer to, a young man walking across a *Bunan* ground, trod upon a sharp pointed piece of bone, became ill, and died. The symptoms described to me suggest blood poisoning. One then comes naturally to think of the statements which are made as to some of the South Australian tribes, namely, that the wizards used pointed bones, which had been left for a time in a putrid corpse, to kill people by scratching them.¹

The belief in the powers of these gommeras held by the tribes people, and even by the younger men who have been much with the whites, is well shown by the statement of one young man to me. He said, "These gommeras can put poison into you, and also suck it out. I have seen one of them suck it out in a good mouthful of blood from a man. They can also find out who it is that has put poison into a person." The word "poison" is very generally used by the aborigines as we should use the word "magic" or "magical substance." Perhaps the best equivalent is the North American term "medicine."

The Kurnai Biraark.

A peculiar feature in the Kurnai magic is the separation of the functions of the seer and bard from those of the doctor and wizard as herein described. The Kurnai *biraark* combined the seer, the spirit medium, and the bard, for he foretold future events, he brought the ghosts to the camps of his people at night, and he composed the songs and dances which enlivened their

¹ "Native Tribes of South Australia," Adelaide, 1879. "The Narrinyeri," by the Rev. George Taplin. Sec. iii. p. 29. *Neilyeri*, or the poison revenge.

social meetings. He was a harmless being, who devoted himself to spiritual performances which resembled very strikingly those of civilised “mediums.” I have already written about these men,¹ and a few words only now remain to be said of them.

One of the best remembered biraark was a man of the Brabra clan, named Mündauin. It is related of him that he became a biraark by having dreamed three times that he was a kangaroo, and as such participated in a “corroboree” of those animals. In consequence of this kindred he could not eat any part of a kangaroo on which there was blood. Nor could he even carry one home which had any blood on it. Others did this and gave him such pieces when cooked as he could eat. He said in reference to this that if he were to eat any kangaroo meat with blood on it, or touch the fresh blood of a kangaroo, the *mrarts* would no longer take him up aloft.

Mündauin said that after dreaming of the kangaroos he began to hear the ghosts drumming and singing up aloft, and that finally one night they came and carried him away. A man who was present in the camp on the occasion of one of his “manifestations,” said as follows:—

“In the night his wife shouted out, ‘He is gone up.’ Then we heard whistling in the air, first on one side of us, then on the other, and afterwards sounds as of people jumping down on the ground. After a time all was quiet. In the morning he found Mündauin lying on the ground near the camp, where the *mrarts* had left him. He had a big log lying across his back. He seemed as if asleep, and when we woke him up and took the log off him, he began to sing about the *mrarts*, and all he had seen up above.”

At another *séance* by Mündauin the ghosts said finally, speaking in hollow, muffled voices, which my informant imitated by holding his nose when speaking, “We must now go home, or the west wind may blow us out to sea.” In the morning the biraark was found as before lying on the ground outside the camp, and round about him were the marks of feet deeply stamped into the soil, where the *mrarts* had alighted.

Besides learning news from the ghosts about absent friends, and possibly present enemies, the biraarks were also material benefactors to their tribesmen, as when the ghosts informed them of a whale stranded on the shore. For it was thought that the whales were in such cases intentionally killed by the *mrarts* and sent ashore for the Kurnai.

At such times messengers were sent out, and all the surrounding people from far inland collected to feast upon the “food sent by

¹ Kamilaroi and Kurnai, p. 253.

the gods." No doubt at such times the biraark was not forgotten.

Powers such as these of the biraark were also attributed to the wizards of the Wotjballuk and the Wirajuri, who were believed to be able to bring down the ghosts to the camp at night, so that the people could see their dim figures walking about in the gloom.

Magical Omens.

I have now noted the principal beliefs which have come to my knowledge bearing upon the powers and the office of the wizards and the doctors. A few words may conclude this section as to the omens and warnings believed in, and which are in some measure connected with magic.

I have several times mentioned a common belief that kangaroos can give warning of coming danger. A Murring young man, who served me as a messenger, in connection with initiation affairs, had a bag of powerful charms (*joëa*), which had been given to him to take care of by a gommera, his relative, and by other gommeras. Among these was one which he prized very highly, and on inspection I found it to be the top of a cut-glass stopper of some bottle. The use of these magical objects to the young man was in the manner of protective charms. When I asked him how they would protect him, he said, "If I were going along, and saw an old man kangaroo hopping straight towards me and looking at me, I should know that he was giving me notice that enemies were about. I should get my spear ready, and I should hold my *joëa* bag in my hand, so that if the man were to chuck something at me I should be safe." The throwing of the *joëa* is, in other words, the projection by some wizard of a quartz crystal or other magical substance. In this case the young man has the kangaroo for his *totem* (from his father). I may note, that "getting his spear ready" is a mere figure of speech for being prepared, for the Murring have long laid aside their native weapon, the spear, for the white man's gun.

The Kurnai also believe in kangaroo warnings, and for one to dream of a number of "old men kangaroos" sitting round his camp, is to receive a serious warning of danger.

It was a practice with them to consult the crow in times of danger, by saying to it, "Which way shall I go?—north, south, east, west?" When the bird croaked "*Nga-a-a*" (yes) the oracle had spoken, and the omen was accepted. One of the nightjars has a note which the Kurnai say is "*borün-borün*," or "jag spear, jag spear," and indicates that enemies are about. The note of another bird—which I have now unfortunately forgotten—indicates the arrival shortly of some one.

A Kurnai hearing a cracking sound in the ground under his head when lying in his camp by fire at night, would consider that the ground was giving him warning against some danger near at hand.

In all tribes with which I am acquainted, the lives and actions of the people are much influenced by such omens as well as by dreams.

Doctors' Fees.

It goes without saying that the wizards and doctors in all these tribes did not exercise their powers gratis. Presents were given them by people who had benefited by their art, and also by people who feared lest they should suffer from it. They received presents of weapons, rugs, implements—in fact, of all those things which are of value to the aborigines, not forgetting a share of the game caught. Especially did they reap a harvest at the great gatherings. The *Bunan* gatherings of the Coast Murring may be taken as an example. Before the people separated to return home, a sort of fair or market was held, to which people brought the weapons, rugs, implements, &c., which they had brought with them for the purpose.¹ From these “fairs” the gommeras went away loaded with gifts.

IV.

How Men became Doctors or Wizards.

The subject of this section I have found to be one of almost insuperable difficulty. The blackfellow doctors surround themselves with profound mystery and of course give the account of themselves which best suits their purpose. The relation which these statements, as current in the tribe, bear to the truth, is no doubt the same as that of the proceedings at initiations given to the women and children in relation to the true proceedings. What these latter are the reader can learn by reference to my two communications to this Institute.² The statements made to the women are that *Daramulun* comes down in person and knocks the boy's tooth out (Murring, Ngarego, Theddora, Wolgal, Wirajuri), that *Turndun* comes down and makes the boys into men (Kurnai).

On the Lower Lachlan and the Murray the novice is said to meet *Thrumalun*, who kills him and brings him again to life.

In one part of Queensland the sound of the Bullroarer is said to be the noise made by the wizards in swallowing the boys and bringing them up again as young men. The Ualaroi of the

¹ This fair has fallen out of use at the present time.

² “On some Australian Ceremonies of Initiation” and “The Kurnai Jeraeil.”

Upper Darling River say that the boy meets a ghost which kills him and brings him to life again as a man.

So it is with the doctors and wizards. The tribes are full of tales of the manner in which these men acquire their terrible powers.

As I have said, I have found the elucidation of this subject most difficult, and I have not succeeded in working it out at all to my satisfaction. The wizards of "the olden time"—that is, of the time before the tribes became "tamed" by the whites—soon die out blighted by our civilisation, or they linger on and either shut themselves up within themselves or give themselves up to rum and its consequences.

The second generation of blackfellow doctors loses much of the old practice of magic, and by-and-by these die and the race becomes extinct, and only shows now and then in some old man who has partially retained some of the magical practices of the old time. Such has now become within the last few years the condition of the Kurnai, and it will be the same with every Australian tribe as the wave of civilisation rolls over and crushes it.

The Kurnai belief is that the doctors (*Mulla mullung*) obtained their powers in dreams. Either the ancestral ghosts visited the sleeper and communicated to him protective chants, or they took him in spirit with them and completed his education elsewhere. Tulaba is a case of the former,¹ and Tankli, the son of the Lace Lizard, is an instance of the latter, as I shall relate further on.

The wizard of the Kurnai appears in the form of the *biraark*, a harmless being who was the medium of communication between the ghosts and the tribe. It will be seen that the account given of himself by Tankli combines both the beliefs as to the manner in which men became doctors or spirit mediums.

The Wotjobaluk believed that a man became a *bangal* (wizard) by meeting with a supernatural being, called by them *Ngatje*, who is said to live in the hollows in the ground in the Mallee Scrubs. They think that the *Ngatje* opens the man's side and inserts therein such things as quartz crystals, by which he obtains his powers. From that time he can "pull things out of himself and others," such as quartz, wood, charcoal, and also from his arms "something like feathers" which are considered to have healing properties.

The Woiworong also believed that their wiraraps were instructed by the ghosts who conveyed them to the sky through a hole to *Bunjil*, from whom they received their magical powers.

The Murring of the coast considered that it was Daramulun who gave their powers to the gommeras, but at the same time

¹ See p. 39.

thought that a boy could be trained up "in the way he should go"—that is, in magical ways. A great gommera, called by the whites Waddiman, that is to say, "Tree climber," who died only a few years ago, is reported to have said that he was trained up as a boy by a very great gommera of that time. As Waddiman died at a great age, his training took place probably some sixty years ago. He also said that he got his magical powers from Daramulun.¹

The Ngarego, Wolgal, and Theddora held the same belief as to Tharamulun being the source of the magical power of their wizard.

The Wirajuri wizards professed to go up to *Baiame* for their powers.² But the wizards also in this tribe trained up their sons to follow in their steps. The account which I subjoin was given to me by a Wirajuri of the kangaroo totem of the Muri sub-class, and is an excellent example of the beliefs held in such matters.

This narrative was given voluntarily during a conversation I had with him about the initiation ceremonies of his tribe. He had been careful not to betray anything unlawfully until he found out from my answers to him that I was indeed one of the initiated. He then became quite communicative and gave me a full account of the Wirajuri ceremonies (*bürbüng*), and in many respects I was able to check his statements and found him to be quite accurate. He then, when we were talking about the magical exhibition of the wizards at the ceremonies, said, "I will tell you about how my old father began to make a black-fellow doctor of me." My impression is that his account was *bonâ fide*, and from my experience I should say that it would be an unheard-of thing for a man to falsify when speaking of matters relating to such sacred subjects as the initiation with an initiated person. I mention this because I have not been able to verify his statements. Up to the present time I have not succeeded in placing myself in communication with the old man, his father, who is believed to be still living on the Lower Murrumbidgee River. I now give his account in his own words as far as possible, and I leave it to my readers to form their own opinion as to its value:

"My father is Yibai—Iguana.³ When I was quite a small boy he took me from the camp into the bush to begin to train me

¹ As to Daramulun see "On some Australian Beliefs," and "On some Australian Ceremonies of Initiation," *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, vol. xiii, p. 192, 432, &c.

² *Baiame* is the analogue of Daramulun or Bunjil, or Munganngaura, the supernatural being to whom the aborigines attribute the institution of their social organization, and the invention of their arts.

³ *Yibai* = *Ipai* of the Kamilaroi.

to be a *wulla mullung* (doctor or wizard). He placed two large quartz crystals against my breast, and they vanished into me. I do not know how they went, but I felt them going through me like warmth. This was to make a clever man¹ of me and able to bring things up. He also gave me some things like quartz crystals, in water. They looked like ice, and the water tasted sweet. After that I used to see things that my mother could not see. When out with her I would say, 'Mother, what is that out there, like men walking?' She used to say, 'Child! there is nothing!' These were the *jir* (or ghosts) which I began to see.

"When I was taken to the Burbung² and had seen what all the old men could bring up out of themselves, and when my tooth was out I went into the bush for a time, and while there my old father came out to me. He said, 'Come here to me,' and he then showed me a quartz crystal in his hand, and when I looked at it he went down into the ground and came up all covered with red dust. It made me very frightened. He then said, 'Come with me to this place,' and I followed him into a hole leading to a grave where there were some dead men who rubbed me over to make me clever, and who gave me some quartz crystals. When we came out my father pointed to a tiger snake, saying, 'That is your Būdjan.'³ There was a string tied to the tail of the snake. It was one of those strings which the doctors bring up out of themselves curled up together. He took hold of this string, and said, 'Come, follow him.' The tiger-snake went through several tree trunks, which opened and let us through. Then he came to a great Currajong tree⁴ and went through it, and afterwards to an immense tree with a great mound round the roots.⁵ It is in such places that Daramulun lives.⁶ Here the tiger-snake went down into the ground, and we followed him and came up under the tree which was hollow. There I saw a number of little Daramuluns. After he came out again the tiger-snake took us to a great hole in the ground which was filled by a lot of tiger-snakes, which rubbed themselves against me, but did not hurt me, being my Būdjan. They did this to make me a clever man and a *wulla mullung*.

"My father then said we will go up to Baiame's camp. He got astride of a thread and put me on another, and we held by each other's arms. At the end of the two threads was Wombū the

¹ To be a "clever man" is the phrase used for being a wizard.

² Initiation ceremony.

³ *Būdjan* = totem. The tiger snake is his secret totem; his own by inheritance through his mother is kangaroo.

⁴ *Brachychiton populneum*.

⁵ See the Ngarang of the Woiworung.

⁶ The Wirajuri say the Daramulun is the son, or one of the sons, of Baiame.

bird of Baiame. We went through the clouds, and on the other side was the sky. We went through the place where the doctors go through, and it kept opening and shutting very quickly. My father said that if it touched a doctor as he was going through it would hurt his spirit, and when he returned home he would sicken and die.

“On the other side we saw Baiame sitting in his camp. He was a very great old man with a long beard. He sat with his legs under him and from his shoulders extended two great quartz crystals to the sky above him. There were also numbers of the boys of Baiame and of his people who are birds and beasts.

“After this, while I was in the bush, I began to bring up things, but I became very ill, and cannot do anything since.”

There are some things to notice in connection with this man's statement which I shall defer until the concluding section of this paper.

The account which was given me by Tankli of the manner in which he became a *wulla mullung* is as follows. I have kept to his own language as nearly as possible :

“When I was a big boy, about getting whiskers, I had some dreams about my father. He came to me with a number of old men. I was at that time camped with my people at Tarraville,¹ and Morgan and other old men were there. When I first dreamed my father and the other men who were with him stood round me. They were all rubbed over with red ochre, and they made me hold a cord made of sinews, and they swung me about on it. After that when they came once or twice they were dressed as if for the *jeraeil*.² My father put a cord of sinews round my waist and under my arms, and he and the old men carried me by it over the sea at Corner Inlet, and set me down at Wilson's Promontory in front of a big rock like the side of a house. I noticed that there was something like a door which opened and shut very quickly. My father tied something over my eyes and led me into the rock. I knew this because I heard the door make a sound of shutting to behind us. Then he uncovered my eyes and I found that I was in a place as bright as day, and all the old men were round about. My father showed me a lot of shining bright things on the wall and told me to take some. Then we went out again and he taught me how to make these things go into my legs, and how I could pull them out again. He also taught me how to throw them at people. After that he and the other old men carried me by the cord back to the camp and put me in the top of a big tree.

¹ In South Gippsland.

² Initiation ceremonies of the Kurnai.

He said, 'Shout out loud, and tell the people you are come back.' I did this and I heard the people in the camp waking up and the women begin to beat their rugs. Then old Morgan and the old men came out with firesticks, and when they reached the tree I was down and was standing by it on the ground, with the thing my father had given to me in my hand. It was like glass and we call it *k̄in* (quartz). I told the old men all about it, and they said I was a doctor. From that time I could pull things out of people, and I could throw the *k̄in* like light in the evening at people to hurt them. I have caught several in that way. About three years ago I took to drinking and I then lost my *k̄in* and all my power, and have never been able to do anything since. I used to keep it in a bag of ringtail 'possum skin in a hole in a tree. One night I dreamed that I was sleeping in my camp and that my wife threw some *krūk*¹ on me. After that I never could do anything, and my *k̄in* went out of the bag, I do not know where. I have slept under the tree where I left it, thinking that my power might come back, but I have never found the *k̄in*, nor can I dream any more of it."

V.

Conclusion.

The general belief of the aborigines as to the powers of the wizard are much the same in all the tribes herein spoken of. He is everywhere said to have received his dreaded powers from some supernatural source, from the ancestral ghosts, or from Daramulun, Baiame, or Bunjil. In all cases he is credited with the power of seeing man in an incorporeal state, either temporarily or permanently separated from the body, as a ghost which is invisible to other eyes.

He can, it is thought, ascend to ghost-land beyond the sky, or can transport himself or be transported by the ghosts from one spot of earth to another at will, much after the manner of the Buddhist Arhat. The powers thus conferred upon him he can use either to injure or destroy men, or to preserve them from the secret attacks of other wizards. He can also, it is thought, assume animal forms and control the elements. In these beliefs as to the powers of the blackfellow doctors, we find a striking resemblance to those which have been held concerning wizards, sorcerers, and witches in the past in those parts of the earth as to which we possess records, as well as to those beliefs common to savage peoples all over the world at present. Nor can it be said that they have altogether died out even in the most civilized races.

¹ Menses.

Some of the practices of the Australian wizards are not only found in all the tribes I have dealt with herein, but they extend throughout the Australian continent. For instance the use of the quartz crystal and of human fat. The use of the transparent crystals of quartz is also world-wide for magical purposes, and may perhaps have been handed down from the most distant times when our own ancestors were savage. It is difficult to say why it should have been so universally fixed upon as peculiarly fitted for the practice of magic; but it is open to conjecture that it may have been, as with the Australian savages, on account of its peculiarly clear and waterlike appearance, which had attracted attention and caused feelings of wonder.

The practice of fat-taking in the form in which the belief is found, seems also most difficult to explain and account for. After considering all the evidence before me, I have thought that it may perhaps have been the outcome of the combined effect of two beliefs, which are held by the blackfellows. One is as to the nature of dreams, and the other as to the position which fat holds in the human economy.

It has become pretty clear to me that many beliefs of the Australian savage have arisen out of attempts by his ancestors to account for phenomena which they have perceived both around and within themselves. I have been forcibly struck when travelling in the wide, open, and level stretches of the interior of the continent by the apparently self-evident view which the earth and the sky suggest of a flat surface and a vaulted covering. The Australian savage holds this to be the actual fact, and it cannot have seemed less patent or less reasonable to his ancestors. He attempts to account for the space between the earth and the sky by saying that at one time they touched each other, that is to say, the sky lay on the earth, and that the magpie,¹ who was at that time a man, pushed up the former with a stick so that the sun could commence his ceaseless course.² When the sun goes down at evening into the glow of sunset, he explains the phenomenon by saying that he has gone into a place resembling a glowing cavity, out of which a tree stump has been burned.³ It is by such explanations that he endeavours to account for natural phenomena which have excited his curiosity—a spirit of inquiry into the surroundings which is inherent in man, and not only in him but in a decreasing amount as we trace back the chain of animated nature.

How such views as the above have been so strongly held by

¹ In the Wotjobaluk language *Goržk*.

² The sun is a female, according to the Wotjobaluk, seeking daily for her little boy whom she had lost while digging for yams.

³ Woiworong tribe.

our own ancestors, is well shown by the impress of primitive thought upon language which has compelled me, at the time unconsciously, to use words which in fact imply that the sun moves from east to west, and sinks beyond the western edge of the world :

“ Then we upon our globe’s last verge shall go
And view the ocean leaning on the sky.”

When at night the blackfellow sleeps by his camp fire, and has dreams, he explains them by saying that while his body lies motionless, he himself is able to wander abroad, and to do or to suffer. He even attempts to fix the precise time by explaining another phenomenon by saying that the human spirit goes upon its nocturnal wanderings when the sleeper snores.¹ When waking he is conscious that he exists, together with his body, and he calls his self-consciousness by some name, such as the Kurnai word “Yambo.” During waking moments he and his body are inseparable, but during sleep he can leave it and wander abroad and then meet the spirits of other people, of those he knows, of strangers, and even of the dead.

Thus this view of the reality of dreams, enables the Australian savage to reach, by a natural stage of reasoning, a conception of the individual apart from the body, not only during life but also after death, as an immaterial, invisible being, for who can see the Yambo leaving the sleeper? Yet it is visible to other sleepers as the experience of every blackfellow will assure him.

No distinction separates this belief from another, namely that some persons are even so gifted as to be able to see the disembodied spirit sitting by the spot where its body lies buried, and no longer able to resume its accustomed habitation. These peculiarly gifted seers lead direct to the doctor and the wizard.

In dreams, the blackfellow visits the vaulted sky beyond which lies the mysterious home of that great and powerful Being, who is Bunjil, Baiame, or Daramulun in different tribal languages, but who in all is known by a name the equivalent of the only one used by the Kurnai, which is *Mungan ngaur*, or “Our Father.” In dreams he sees the dead peopling that land of trees and streams, and he naturally finds among them those old men who directed the tribe on earth, and who now only remain there in reverential memory.

It seems to me that this belief in the reality of dreams, as regards the human self-consciousness gives a key to many universal beliefs which otherwise seem almost inexplicable.

¹ Woiworung tribe. Mr. Fison tells me that this is also a South Sea belief, where a peculiar snore denotes this state.

The second belief to which I have referred as having probably reacted with the notion of the reality of dreams in producing the practice of Bukin is that as to the nature of human fat. I find a general belief that there is some connection between a man's fat and his strength and vitality. Health, strength and fatness seem to be directly connected, and, therefore, the wasting of the body and disease to be the result of the absence of fat, and perhaps followed by death. The belief that a man's vitality and his fat have some connection, is shown by the widespread practice of eating the fat of deceased persons and of enemies slain.¹ I have given an instance of such a practice among the Kurnai. By eating a man's fat, and thus making it part of himself, the blackfellow believes that also acquires the strength of the deceased. So it is also that the human fat brings in hunting, causes spears to fly true to their mark, or the club to strike irresistible blows.

It is a common belief that when two things are associated together any magical power possessed by one will be communicated to the other. For instance, when returning from the Murring Kuringal, I was the custodian of the teeth which had been extracted from the novices, and the old men earnestly besought me not to carry them in the bag in which they were aware I had some quartz crystals. They pointed out that if I did so, the magic of the quartz crystal would pass into the teeth, and injure the boys. I might continue with a number of such illustrations of the belief in the "spiritual" influence, if I may use such an expression of one substance through another upon a third.

The possession of human fat is, therefore, much desired by the aborigines, especially those who feel age or disease, and those who desire to be successful in magical arts.² The desire to obtain it leads to the killing of aliens, or even, in some cases, of people of the same tribe. The practice of taking fat is a real one, and as such would most certainly become part of the stock of dreams of the blackfellow, who believes that the wizards, especially those of inimical tribes, are always on the look out for chances to take fat, either by direct violence or invisibly by

¹ For instance see Gason's remarks as to the eating of human fat by the Dieyerie. "The Dieyerie Tribe" by Samuel Gason, Adelaide, 1874: also "Native Tribes of South Australia" Wigg, Adelaide, p. 274.

² The desire to use the influence of those portions of the human body in which the aborigines believe the vital strength to reside leads them to use, not only fat but also other sources of strength which it is hardly possible to explain in direct language. So far as I know at present, the practice I refer to occurs in a Cooper's Creek tribe and also as lately described to me by Mr. C. M. King, the Police Magistrate at Milparinka, in New South Wales, in the tribe at that place. All that I can now say is that it seems to be connected with the peculiar practice in some tribes of slitting the urethra.

means of some of their terrible secret arts. A blackfellow suffering from nightmare, dreams in accordance with his waking beliefs and experiences. An evil ghost has seized his foot and is about to drag him out of his camp, or the *Bret-bung* has caught him at last and is about to extract his fat (Kurnai). What can seem more horribly real than such subjective impressions. A white man who has had nightmare, and has dreamed that he has fallen helplessly into the hands of garotters can realise how irresistibly truthful analogous dreams must seem to the blackfellow and that sometimes he actually dies after a succession of such dreams, from what seems to be nervous collapse.

I think we may feel sure that the belief in the supernatural powers of the wizards rests in part upon the effect of dreams upon the aborigines, and partly upon the want of knowledge by them of the true nature of disease. They naturally attribute disease, which is not the normal state of the sound human body, to supernatural influences, in their attempts to find an explanation. A Kurnai suffering from bronchitis, and seeking for a cause, finds one in the semblance of his sensations to what he might expect to feel if his chest were stuffed up with the charred dust which falls from the "fire drill." He says, therefore, that Brewin or some blackfellow doctor has filled him with "Tündüng." A Wotjobaluk who suffers from some form of fever and who has delirious dreams, in which he sees the fantastic actions of people conjured up by his fevered brain, receives this as a clear proof that one of these people has burned something appertaining to him. These instances will suffice to illustrate my meaning, but they might be multiplied indefinitely.

The most difficult question which I have had to deal with in this inquiry has been to determine how far the doctors and wizards believe in their own powers. All explanations concerning them must be given by the tribes-people or by themselves, and if the latter one has to distinguish between those explanations which are truthful and those others which are not, and which have been made for the purpose of blinding the tribe. Herein lies the great difficulty. The class of blackfellow doctors is almost extinct in the tribes of which I have a personal knowledge, to which I have access and in which I am so well known, that the old men do not, when questioned, shut themselves up in a reserve which often successfully simulates dense stupidity. The "real old gommeras" of the Murring became extinct when Waddiman died a few years ago. The last biraark of the Kurnai was killed twenty-five or thirty years back. The Woiworung and Jupagalk wirarap and bangal have been all

dead I do not know how long. There only remain, so far as I can learn, two old men, wizards of the olden time, within that part of Australia covered by the inquiries noted in this paper. One of them wanders somewhere between the Wimmera and the Murray rivers, the other on the Lower Murrumbidgee, the Yibai-Iguana, whom I have already mentioned in these pages. As yet I have failed to meet with them, and for all I know these two old men may even now have gone from the land of their ancestors to the "ghost-land" of Baiame.

The blackfellow doctors as a class naturally surround themselves with mystery. Their magical practices are not favoured by too open examination, and the more that is left to the active imaginations of their tribe, the better their assertions are received. But within the inner circle of initiated I have found so far that there is but a thin veil cast over the arts magic which are performed in public.

The doctors and wizards in these tribes are, with few exceptions, conscious pretenders and impostors. The very few who believe that they are able to effect cures by charms received in dreams are men like Tulaba. As for the others, I have a good example in two old Murring men, who came to see me some twelve years back, and who still have a great reputation as being very powerful wizards and doctors. To me these men do not profess to be able to do supernatural acts, but the tribesmen have ocular evidence, for they have seen them "bring up things out of themselves" at the Kuringal. As I have already stated one excused himself for no longer having that power by having "drunk too much grog" which had spoiled his *joča* (magic); the other smiled and said that he had drunk too much tea. When these men came to see me they brought a number of the Murring. Being friendly with the Kurnai, they were also much with them. One of these being ill consulted one of the Murring doctors who, after manipulating him, sucked the afflicted place, and exhibited a quartz crystal as being the cause of the ill. He also told the patient that it had been thrown at him by the other Murring doctor. The man got well, and the reputation of the two old men was greater than ever. It was, however, a very dangerous game to play, as had the man died, the evidence would have been conclusive.

As to the two men, Tankli and Muri-Kangaroo, the case is somewhat different, and they represent a class which was larger in the tribes formerly. Granting all that can be said as to the intentional fraud of the blackfellow doctors, and admitting that many of them are mere cheats and frauds, there remain some who really have a belief in their own powers as well as in those of other men. I feel strongly assured that both the Kurnai and

Wirajuri men believe that the events which they related were real, and that they actually experienced them.

As to Tankli, it seems to be most probable that his case has been one of nervous exaltation combined with somnambulism and that upon the "subjective realities" in that state he has built up a structure of deceit in his practice of his curative art. That he believes also in the reality of his dream which he says caused him to lose his *k̄in* and his magical powers seems most probable, when one considers that he has voluntarily relinquished the practice of an art which brought him great consideration.

The case of Muri-Kangaroo seems to me to point to the practice of some form of hypnotism among the old class of wizards. The youth at the time of initiation is in a peculiar and abnormal mental state. He is fed full of magical ceremonies and beliefs. He has undergone fearful and impressive ceremonies, and is in a condition which would be peculiarly fitted for the practice of hypnotism.

One can understand that a youth who had passed through such an experience could never doubt the reality of the magic powers of others, even when himself conscious that he had no such powers.

The difficulty I see in this view, is, however, that so far as I know, persons who have been hypnotised, and thus brought under the influence of waking dreams, do not afterwards remain conscious of the subjective events of that state.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. LAWRENCE GOMME observed that although he had not expected, as a visitor, to be called upon to speak, yet he had noted one or two facts which the paper had brought out and which it was interesting to emphasize. In the first place it must be noted how the office of wizard or medicine man was distinctly an academic office, if such a term might be used of camp society. He meant by that expression that aspirants to the office had to undergo some preparation or special training and had to possess special faculties. This feature alone made a clear distinction between the superstitions of witchcraft and the generally current popular superstitions which did not depend upon specially appointed advocates. Mr. Gomme noted that the Australian blackfellow doctor was supposed to obtain his medicinal objects from his own stomach or inside, whereas if the researches of Dr. Callaway in Africa were consulted, it would be found that the Zulu wizard obtained his magic medicines from the ground and that great skill and training was supposed to be required to be able successfully to find these objects. On the whole Zulu witchcraft was a much more systematic cult than the Australian, and it was a question whether the Australian

really believed all he practised or had passed forward to the stage of unbelief. Mr. Gomme thought that he really believed in his own powers. Another feature prominently brought out by Mr. Howitt's paper, was the custom of repeating rhyming incantations. This was a subject that Mr. Gomme said he had paid considerable attention to and had made large collections of examples and it was curious how nearly everywhere much virtue was supposed to exist in the formulæ being in rhyme. Mr. Howitt's paper was particularly valuable because it was the personal observation of a traveller, and his notes would form a substantial addition to the already extensive literature of witchcraft.

Major E. CECIL JOHNSON, F.R.Hist.S., remarked that one of the most interesting points in the paper was the allusion to crystal as one of the substances supposed to be extracted by the "medicine men" or "wizards" from the bodies of their victims. Crystal had been associated from time immemorial in some mysterious way with the assumption of supernatural powers. We find it mentioned by medicinal writers in the black art as one important factor in the unholy rites of witchcraft. We find it credited with magical properties amongst the Jadoogars of India, we find it used by Cagliostro in recent times, and by modern mesmerists in electro-biological experiments.

Mr. RUDLER also made some remarks on the superstitions associated with rock crystal. Pieces of crystal are occasionally found in barrows, and seem to have been valued as amulets. He alluded also to the divining ball of Dr. Dee, which was a sphere of rock crystal now preserved in the Mineralogical gallery of the British Museum (Natural History).

The following paper was taken as read :—

NOTES *on the* NUMERAL SYSTEM *of the* YORUBA NATION.

By ADOLPHUS MANN, Esq.

OF late, the nations and languages of West Africa have largely occupied the attention of the learned linguists of Europe, and grammars and vocabularies are being published in considerable number. By means of the laborious work of Mr. Rob. N. Cust on "The Modern Languages of Africa," the classification of the four or five hundred languages has been advanced to such an extent as could not, some years ago, have been expected. Perhaps the following notes on the numeral system of the Yoruba nation may interest the student of ethnology and languages, and may be of some use in investigating the nature of the mind that can form such an unusual, yet regular structure. A superficial knowledge, with a slight attempt of praxis, suffices to understand peculiarities in the arrangement of these numerals, to which