

a subject of so much importance. Such records as these of what is to be learned of the far distant races of the world are indeed of great value. It is true that the idea has gained ground, in not few quarters, that the aborigines of Australia are so utterly degraded and so devoid of the ordinary distinguishing marks of humanity that they can hardly be said to be men at all, or, at any rate, men of the same species as ourselves. But the testimony we have had to-night from one who has long lived among them, and who, therefore, speaks of his own knowledge, is extremely valuable, inasmuch as it presents a very different view, and makes it clear that those who take the trouble to become acquainted with these races, and by treating them with kindness come to know them intimately, are able to tell a very different story from that which is told by those who have only come in contact with them to tyrannise over and ill-treat them. It has been frequently and boldly stated that the aborigines of Australia have no religious customs. I am afraid that a great many ignorant people are too apt to be shy of making their religion public, so that others may conclude they have none at all; why, therefore, should we suppose that the habit of reticence which induces so many to keep their religious feelings in the background is not to be met with in other races than our own? Is it not a rule that, what men care most about, they talk least about, especially before strangers? And, if this be so, ought we not, when we find it stated that such and such a race is entirely devoid of any religious feeling or sentiment, to assume that the assertion is made from want of knowledge, and that in all probability the contrary is the fact. We know it is being brought out more and more clearly that the negro race, whose fetish worship we have heard so much about, know nothing about fetish worship, such as is frequently described; and, therefore, if most of the statements that have been made about them are unreliable, so also may be those that have been put forward with regard to the Australian aborigines, whose very remarkable religious customs have been traced out by the author of this paper, as well as the extraordinary connexion that exists between their religious customs and those practised by the black race in Africa. It is, consequently, for those who say that these natives of Australia are not of the same race or nature as our own, to explain how the religious ideas, of which we have now heard, can have sprung up independently, especially the idea of that dim, shadowy kind of

regeneration, or second life, which would seem to be a part of their religious system. It is very interesting to trace the customs that are so strongly developed in this,—ethnologically,—out-of-the-way corner of the earth, and to find expressed, in the manner related by the author of the paper, the idea of the mysteries of initiation, as well as other ideas that have been rendered familiar to us through the classical literature which describes the Eleusinian and other mysteries, derived no doubt from Egypt, which were from a Hamite source; and these we find, in almost every feature of the familiar type, developed in the far-away portion of the earth with which we have been dealing. I hope that those present who may have something to say on this subject will now give us the benefit of their views.

REV. F. A. WALKER, D.D., F.L.S.—On page 13 it is stated that “the *pomærium*, or circuit of the walls of Rome, was a sacred ring, and the circus was consecrated to the sun and was open to the sky.” I should like to say that there is much in the nature of a counterpart of this, on a small scale, still extant in the ruins of Ephesus. There is a circular platform evidently, at one time, part of the shrine of the sun, and having a circular base; in the middle there is the corolla of a flower and around it the remains of what would exactly have resembled the petals of the sunflower. It is not part of the circus, and it may be as well to mention that it is very near the *stadium* or racecourse which still exists there.

A VISITOR.—I have lived for a while in Australia, and as regards the native belief in a God I may state that I have, in the course of my travels, come across a great many cases in which men of the very lowest type have shown that they all had some idea of religious worship, and my conclusion is that the reason for this is to be found in the fact that God has put into their minds faculties which compel them, as a matter of necessity,—of absolute necessity,—to worship Him, and the more we analyse the minds of men the more, I think, shall we be inclined to come to this conclusion.

REV. H. WALKER-TAYLOR.—As an Australian clergyman I venture to say just a few words on what the writer of the paper has brought before us. I am sure we are all very much indebted to the author for having dealt so ably with a subject which, in many of its aspects, is comparatively unknown. I certainly do object to the idea that has been getting abroad for many years that the aborigines of Australia are a degraded people. Any one coming in contact with them, and

knowing their religious traditions, must see that those traditions are based on something more ancient and something which shows that they hold the idea of a spiritual being, and that they look on the curious life of this world as a life of work and thought, having relation towards a life of action and thought to come. One who knows a great deal of Australia and the Australians, says that the ordinary idea of omnipotence, goodness, and eternity is distinctly characterised in the religious ideas of the Australian natives. As to the proposition which has been advanced that these people came from India, there would appear to be good grounds for that supposition, as shown by certain similarities of phrases and the resemblances which point to a migration through New Guinea, the people who established themselves in the northern part of Australia having evidently penetrated that country from the southern part of New Guinea, going afterwards south-west, and thus overspreading the continent of Australia. This, at any rate, is the idea of those who have looked into the question. Tradition certainly seems to point to the Australian aborigines coming from the north. Ridley (perhaps the chief authority amongst the many devoted missionaries and laymen who have lived amongst them and investigated the history and customs of the race) speaks of a tradition about the first landing of man on the north-west coast of Australia from Java. He says, moreover, "it has been shown out of their own mouths, from their songs and their cherished traditions, that they are by no means destitute of some qualities in which civilised men glory; such as the power of inventing tragic and sarcastic fiction, the thirst for religious mystery, stoical contempt of pain, and reverence for departed friends and ancestors. It may be affirmed, with some reason, that they have handed down with reverential care through many generations, a fragment of primeval revelation. The manner in which they have displayed these characteristics present to us such a strange mixture of wisdom and folly, of elevating and degrading thoughts, of interesting and repulsive traditions, of pathetic and grotesque observances, that in order to account for the apparent contradictions, we must have recourse to *the supposition of an ancient civilisation from which this race has fallen*, but of which it has *retained some memorials*." I need not now say more than to express my sincere pleasure at the full and careful treatment of this most important subject exhibited in the paper of Dr. Fraser. The poor aborigines have been for well-nigh a century hardly the better

for English civilisation. They have been despoiled, degraded, and neglected by the Anglo-Saxon race who occupy their lands. It is well that this paper has been introduced to the notice of the members of this Institute, if only to give new impetus and a new motive to the movement at the antipodes for more righteous and brotherly attention to the material and spiritual wants of our fellow-subjects, the aborigines of Australia.

The meeting was then adjourned.

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING PAPER.

BY THE REV. MYRON EELLS

(Of Pacific University, United States).

I have been very much interested in this paper, because it bears strongly on a subject on which I prepared a paper, which was read in 1885 (see *Transactions*, vol. xix.),—the bearing of the religious ideas of the natives on the unity of the race, and other principles of the Bible, —my paper having had reference to the natives of America, while this one refers to those of Australia. It seems evident from their geographical position, that, next to America, the islands of the Pacific Ocean are the most difficult of access by immigrants from that part of Asia where it is believed that Adam was created, and hence the most likely to be the centres of other human creations, if there were such. Hence, everything which tends to show that the inhabitants of these islands were formerly connected with that part of the human race which inhabits the Eastern continent is specially valuable. Realising this, and my interest in the subject having grown since I wrote that paper, I have, as opportunity offered, examined some works on several of those islands, in order to see how much their religion agrees with that of the Bible. Mr. A. W. Howitt, F.L.S., F.G.S., in a paper in the *Smithsonian Report* for 1883, on the Australian group relations, speaks of their belief in a Supreme Being, and their very great reverence for Him, even in pronouncing His name, and he gives this name in the languages of several of the tribes. W. B. Wildy, in a work on Australasia and the Oceanic region (p. 116), says that the Larrakeyahs and Woolnahs do not practise circumcision, but all the other tribes do; and that the custom is purely traditional. He adds that they are afraid of an evil spirit called Brawl; and that under the trees, up which they bury their dead, they will smooth down the grass in order to detect

any visitation of Brawl; also that before retiring at night, they take a light and hunt around, calling out "Brawl! Brawl!" as if to bring him from his hiding-place. These are the Northern Australians, very low in the scale of civilisation, wearing almost no clothes, eating roots, grubs, worms, the larvæ of ants, lizards and snakes, and practising cannibalism to some extent. Sir John Lubbock, in the Smithsonian Report for 1869, in a paper on the social and religious condition of the lower races of man, also speaks of the belief of the inhabitants of Australia in spirits and a kind of devil, who is spiteful and malevolent, but weak, and dangerous only in the dark. But the paper just read is a most valuable one, and I hope the author will follow up his studies on the subject much farther. There are some things spoken of in this paper which remind me of practices among some of the natives of America. In regard to the ideas of the natives of America about a mediator, and dancing as a mode of worship, I would refer to my paper (*Transactions*, vol. xix., pp. 313, 319). There are among the Indians in Washington Territory, in the north-western part of the United States, two sacred styles of worship practised, called respectively the Red Ta-mah-no-us and Black Ta-mah-no-us, or religious ceremonies. The former derives its name from the red paint with which they paint themselves during its ceremonies. It is by far the most common of the two kinds, is open to the public, and is the usual way which many of them have of occupying the stormy winter days and long evenings. It is often practised by a few persons, and at any time and place, though sometimes considerable preparation is made for it. Any person may engage in its ceremonies, who has obtained his ta-mah-no-us, or guardian spirit. In order to get this, a young man (or woman) goes into the woods alone, where he remains eight, ten, or twelve days, with little or nothing to eat, but during which time he washes himself constantly. While there his ta-mah-no-us is revealed to him in the shape of some animal, which ever after is sacred to him: that is, his guardian spirit dwells in this animal. The latter, or black ta-mah-no-us, takes its name from the black paint which is used, especially on the face, during its ceremonies. This is a secret society, with certain ceremonies, which are public, but the meaning of which they do not tell. The ceremonies of initiation and observance afterwards are only practised at some of the large gatherings. I have seen them but once, when they occupied six or eight days, but I have heard of their lasting two months. Their faces were painted black in various ways, in stripes or spots, or with a part or the whole

of it completely black. About the close of it, the candidates were washed for a long time. In fact, washing and purification constitute an important part of the initiatory ceremonies of both of these modes of worship, and also when a person becomes a medicine man. In both of these we see the period of eight or ten days mentioned in the paper just read, but more especially in the red ta-mah-no-us, whose object is to enable the candidate "to commune with the spirits," as the paper says (p. 5). In the latter, the secret society is plain, and the ceremonies are performed in great state, as in the Bora. Tradition says that this latter originated in British Columbia, in a mythological way. In the practice of the ceremonies of the red ta-mah-no-us, I have seen persons dance around a large fire, clothed with a red blanket, holding a stick in the hand, with face and eyes askance, so that I was forcibly reminded of an old witch with a wand in her hand. This stick was sacred, and the object of the performance was to purify the persons from sin. Singularly enough, however, the red paint is not considered as the symbol of evil, but of good. The tradition of the Skokomish Indians is that, long ago, when a previous race, the progenitors of the present one, dwelt here, the Klik-i-tat Indians of Central Washington came to Skokomish and engaged with those of Skokomish in a great game of gambling. The Klikitats who were painted red, won the game. In process of time, Dokibat, a kind of deity, incarnate, came and changed the people into earth, the Skokomish Indians being changed into the hills on the west side of Hood's canal, which are of common clay colour, and the Klikitats being changed into hills on the east side, where is a bank of red clay, the remains of the red paint, which was on the Klikitats. To that place the Skokomish Indians go for the red paint, which they use in gambling and religious ceremonies, as they believe it to be an omen of good. The circle and sun mentioned in this paper also have their counterpart in America. The ancient civilised nations of Mexico and Peru, and also less civilised tribes, as the Natchez Indians of Louisiana, the Dakotas, whose sun dance is one of the most savage of their religious ceremonies, the Blackfeet, Clallams and Makahs of the northern part of the United States, and the Pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona, all worshipped the sun. Many of these people built temples to it, and there are remains of sacred places in the southwestern part of the United States in circles, which are believed to be the ruins of ancient temples, and which have reminded me of

the circles mentioned in this paper. There is evidence also to believe that the Ancient Mound builders worshipped the sun,

BY MR. HASTINGS C. DENT, C.E., F.L.S.

There are many points in this important paper upon which I should like to write, but my stay in Australia was so short that though I ascertained a good deal, I must not do more than say that all I heard there is confirmed by the author. To study the links between distant nations or people as proved by any similar religious traditions as practices which they respectively hold, is a most valuable sphere of work. May I mention one point upon which the author seems to contradict himself, viz., the two passages on the second page of the paper where he denies "that religiousness is a thing of man's own invention," &c., and the allusion to the "red heifer" of the Israelites, offered "probably with some reference to the Egyptian ideas about this colour." There appears to be in this a tendency to state that the Hebrew records which we hold to be the inspired Word of God, adopted heathen customs. Is it not a much more reasonable—as well as a more lofty—view, to hold that the oral inspiration given to the primeval nations was the *true* origin of the degraded mythologies which we meet with in the most ancient religions? And that this oral inspiration was the preparation for the elaborate system of type and ritual revealed eventually to Moses, and by him reduced to writing. I would have liked the author, as he was dealing with the "religiousness of nations," to say something as to the capability of the Australian aborigines to understand and accept the Christian religion, and their receptivity as to civilisation, &c. I venture to suggest that had the author, with his wide experience, given us some information on this subject, the practical value of the paper would have been very considerably enhanced. I heard and have read much as to the great success of mission work among the natives, both by Roman Catholic and Anglican Missionaries, but had no opportunity of seeing it. But as regards capacity for civilisation, I met some black boys from Western Australia and the Northern Territory, ages from ten to thirteen years; they were travelling on board my steamer from Port Darwin to Brisbane and other parts of Queensland, so I had an opportunity of gauging their powers, &c. They were returning as servants to some miners who were going home after an unsuccessful hunt for gold,

The boys had been taken from the wild tribes, had had no more than a few months' intercourse with white men, yet could talk English well, were very intelligent, and sang English songs very prettily. From all I gathered in Australia (and I visited every part between Port Darwin, along Queensland, down to Adelaide) these aborigines,—reputed to be one of the lowest races of mankind,—appear to have in them all the powers with which man is endowed, and the rising generation is capable of being formed into respectable civilised and religious communities. Of course, from Port Darwin to Brisbane was the most available field for inquiry, as the natives there have not been so entirely “wiped out,” or, at least, are more easily reached than in New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia. In fact, from all I gathered, this appears to offer the greatest opportunities for success of all the foreign fields of mission work that I have seen.

Analogy (*d*), “the fish-shaped roarer,” which the author compares with the Chaldæan god, half man half fish, requires notice, as to the wide-spread relics of fish-worship. The god Vishnu (of India) is described as “incarnate, in the form of a *fish*, to recover the sacred books lost in the Deluge.” The fish was worshipped by the Cuthites or Phœnicians, and relics thereof appear abundantly in Ireland (in which country the round towers are perhaps the best known remains of this very early race). On one of the ancient and beautiful pre-Christian crosses at Kells, county Meath, I have lately seen a carving of six men on their knees worshipping a huge fish as big as themselves. When I was at Fuchau, on the Min river, in China, in October, 1886, I visited the Kushan (Buddhist) monastery, situated aloft in the seclusion of a mountain dell; there is here a huge tank or pond full of sacred fish, mostly perch, some of which are an enormous size. The worshippers at these shrines can, for a few “cash” (a cash is about 1-25th of a penny), buy a lot of biscuits, which they throw into the pond, and immediately the holy fish rise in hundreds to the surface and devour the offerings of the devotees.

The mention of fire worship in Analogy (*g*) is rather too brief. The author might at least have said that this is none other than the worship of Baal. Abundant traces thereof are preserved to this day in Ireland, in names of places or dedications of ancient temples to Cuthite demigods transformed into Christian saints, all of whom are now represented as having lived about the time of St. Patrick, but there yet remains a tradition at Glenda-

lough, co. Wicklow, that in ancient times the heathen priest used to ascend the fine round tower (which has been lately restored) and at sunrise called aloud the name of Baal four times, once from each of the four openings or windows at the summit of the tower, which face the cardinal points of the compass. (Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 26, &c., as to Baal among the Israelites.) Apart from the religious links of affinity between nations, and quite outside the limits of discussion of Mr. Fraser's paper, is the last word I would like to add, but it may perhaps be ruled "out of order." It is, however, an instance of how a link may be traced which has never been thought of. The case in point is the affinity of the Indians of Alaska with the Botocudos of Eastern Brazil. I had the opportunity of attending a recent meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, when a paper was read by Mr. Stearn on his explorations of the Rio Dôce in Brazil, and his sojourn among the Botocudos for a month. In the discussion, Mr. Colin Mackenzie (whom I met in Brazil in 1884) stated that he had traced the custom of the monstrous lip-disc worn by the Botocudos, from the eastern coast of Central Brazil, through the interior, by Central America, to the West Coast in California and thence up to Alaska, where the custom is also found to-day.

REPLY BY THE AUTHOR.

I have to thank the Chairman and those who have taken part in the discussion for their kind approbation of my paper. I may be allowed to state that it was written to combat the theory held by some ethnologists that our Australian blacks are a race distinct from the rest of mankind. Against this theory my argument is briefly this :—The blacks of Western Africa have certain rites and ceremonies, evidently of a religious and sacred character, through which young men have to pass at their opening manhood. The blacks of Australia have similar ceremonies, of a similar import, and in some particulars, identical with those of Africa ; therefore these two races must have drawn their rites of initiation from a common origin and a common source, for it is impossible to believe that two races of mankind, now located so far from each other, and with no opportunities of contact for thousands of years bygone, should have, apart and of themselves, worked out the same beliefs by mere thinking. My introductory remarks, to which Mr. Stephenson refers, were meant to say that man is found to have everywhere a share in the common religious instinct planted in him by God, and, it may be, in a common primitive revelation given by God. All mankind are therefore in this respect homogeneous, but if men were found anywhere who were void of this instinct, the mere use of the thinking faculty would not lead them to religious beliefs and acts of worship.

As to the "red heifer," I should have expressed my meaning more accurately if I had said the red colour of the heifer in the Mosaic ordinance had probably some reference to the notions about that colour which we find among the Hamite races, of which the early Egyptians were a part. I did not intend to say that any portion of the Mosaic ritual was borrowed from the Egyptians. To the white race black is the evil colour ; to the black race white is the spirit-colour, and red is evil.

As to the analogies which may be drawn from Baal worship, I spoke of them as briefly as possible, because they are so well known in Britain.

I may here be asked how I came to possess a full account of the Bora ceremonies, when the blacks hold them as sacred, and will not divulge them. So silent are they on this point that, so far as I know, no one had previously obtained, or at least published, full information about these ceremonies. Well, about sixty years ago it was the custom in this colony for the Government to give grants of Crown land of considerable extent to immigrant gentlemen who were in a position to occupy and improve the land. The father of a friend of mine got a grant in this way, and went to take possession. As I have explained in the paper itself, he was coming down the hill towards the spot where he intended to build his house, when a tribe of blacks camped there rushed off in alarm, taking him to be "Wunda," a spirit; but, reassured by his gestures, they came near, and finding him to resemble a chief of theirs, who had just died, they claimed him as one of themselves! His son, as might be expected, grew up on terms of intimacy with the blacks on the estate, and has always treated them with kindness; they will tell him anything. At my request he got a young black, who had just been initiated, to tell him all about the Bora. I have in various ways tested information thus given, and I am convinced that it is full and accurate.

In the month of September, 1888, there was some correspondence in the *Times* on the subject of Australian arithmetic. A distinguished authority there says, "One of the clearest indications of the low mental power of savages is that afforded by arithmetic." It seems to me that this statement is too general; for even, although the power of counting up to high numbers were wanting in a savage, it does not follow that his mental powers in general are low. Perception, cognition, and memory are mental powers; but if Sir John Lubbock's memory were weak and yet the cognitive and perceptive faculties remained strong and vigorous, it would be unjust to say that he is a man "of low mental power." Colonists who have been long familiar with the blacks of Australia, with one voice cry out against the assertion that they are of low mental power, and could give hundreds of instances to the contrary. A friend of mine who, in his boyhood, fifty years ago, was much in contact with the tribe in the midst of which his father had settled, has told me that two black boys, his companions, were "out and

out good chess-players, taking plenty of time to study the moves, and showing great patience and calmness; these boys never went to school, and yet they could count up to a thousand." It is very clear that mental power was there, in these boys, but unseen and dormant, like seed in the ground, until circumstances led to its being developed.

Sir John Lubbock also says, "In no Australian language is there any word for 'five.'" This is not quite correct, for I know at least two large tribes (and there may be others that I do not know of), the one in Queensland and the other in the south-east of New South Wales, which have single words for "five," and in each case the word "five" is formed from the native word meaning "hand." As to the general question—the counting of numbers—I believe that a careful analysis of the numerals used by the Aryan family of languages will show that the base of them is *one, two, three*, and no more, *three* being in many religions a sacred and complete number; and that the other digits are expressed by words equivalent to one-three, hand, hand-and-one, hand-and-two, two-four, one-wanting two hands. If it should be proved that the Aryans, now the most civilized of races, originally said *one-three* for four, why should our Australians be considered "of low mental power" because they say *two-two* for four? Indeed, I am inclined to think that our Australians count in the more natural way, for they see nothing in or around them arranged in threes; the birds and beasts go in pairs; they themselves have two feet, two hands, two eyes, and so they count by twos. If the Australian blacks separated from the parent stock of mankind at a time when the common numeral system was still limited to *one, two*, or *one, two, three*, then their case is merely one of arrested development, their environment being unfavourable after separation; or if they ever had a developed system of composite numbers, these have fallen into disuse through the operation of a law of nature, for their wants are few and they live so much from hand to mouth that they had no need for high numbers. Their neighbours in Polynesia, who have plenty of fish to count, and bunches of bananas, and yams, and taro and cocoa-nuts, have developed many peculiar expressions to indicate the number of these, but our black fellow, who is well pleased when he is able to sing of the capture of "wakulá, boolará bundarrá" (one, two kangaroos), and whose only property is two or three spears, clubs, and boomerangs, does not require to use high

numbers in his daily speech. Nevertheless, when it is necessary, he counts 10, 20, 30, 40 by closing and opening his hands, and then for higher numbers he contents himself with saying "Many, many."

For these and other reasons it is desirable that men of science in Britain should be careful in building theories upon what is said about our Australian aborigines; much of the information they have about them is unreliable, for it has not been gathered by competent observers or tested on scientific principles.

N O T E.

Professor Max-Müller, in his "Selected Essays" (volume ii., p. 27), makes the following interesting remarks:—

"Looking at a report sent home lately by the indefatigable Governor of New South Wales, Sir Hercules Robinson, I find the following description of the religious ideas of the Kamilarois, one of the most degraded tribes in the North-Western district of the colony:—

"**Bhaiami is regarded by them as the maker of all things.** The name signifies 'maker,' or 'cutter-out,' from the verb *bhai*, *baialli*, *baia*. He is regarded as the rewarder and punisher of men according to their conduct. He sees all, and knows all, if not directly, through the subordinate deity *Turramûlan*, who presides at the *Bora*. **Bhaiami is said to have been once on the earth.** *Turramûlan* is mediator in all operations of *Bhaiami* upon man, and in all man's transactions with *Bhaiami*. *Turramûlan* means 'leg on one side only,' 'one-legged.'

"This description is given by the Rev. C. Greenway, and if there is any theological bias in it, let us make allowance for it. But there remains the fact that *Bhaiami*, their name for deity, comes from a root '*bhai*,' to 'make,' to 'cut out,' and if we remember that hardly any of the names for deity, either among the Aryan or Semitic nations, comes from a root with so abstract a meaning, we shall admit, I think, that such reports as these should not be allowed to lie forgotten in the pigeon-holes of the Colonial Office or in the pages of a monthly journal."—ED.