

CUSTOMS AND HABITS OF THE ABORIGINES.

Their rites of Burial.....Mode of Communication with other Tribes, or with each other, when at a distance.....Methods of procuring Game, Fish, &c.....Their Battles and Private Quarrels.....Their Weapons and Implements.....Their Marriages.....Do the women ever have twins, and whether or not it is known that the women are fruitful after intercourse with white men and on again forming connection with blacks.....The structure of their Huts.....Their Language, and English Translation, &c., &c., &c.

RITES OF BURIAL.

The lowland tribes dig the grave East and West. The body is placed on its back, the head to the East, the face turned on one side, so as to look to the mid-day sun; the earth being thrown out in two heaps, the one at the head the other at the foot. The mountain tribes dig the grave North and South, the body placed on the right side, with the head to the South, the face looking to the rising sun, the earth formed into one crescent-like mound on the West side of the grave.

The soul, spirit, the immaterial part of man, never dies with the body, but goes westward across the sea, from whence the natives suppose they originally came, but when or how they cannot say. Spears and other weapons or implements are placed on or near the graves, and if vengeance has been taken for his death, or a sacrifice slain, the trees are scored and marked in numerous places around the spot.

MODE OF COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER TRIBES, AND WITH EACH OTHER WHEN AT A DISTANCE.

This is done by one or more special messengers. A young man will travel quickly from tribe to tribe, as far as considered safe; others are then sent on. If within a proper distance a smoke is made on the hills, &c.; if within a mile or two, and the weather favourable, a shrill call, or coo-ey, with a particular distinct termination or affix, is used for "where"—"here"—"come"—"no" (nothing, unsuccessful)—"coming"—"successful" (laden with game) —&c. Some of these are very difficult for white people to use, and can only be acquired by practice and perseverance in the wilds of the Bush.

METHOD OF PROCURING GAME.

Chiefly by the spear, barbed or stone set. They cautiously creep, watching the movements of the animal feeding, remaining still whilst it looks around, and getting (on the leeward side) gradually nearer, keeping a bush, tree, or rock between them and the game until within spear's throw.

Pitfalls are dug in the beaten track of the Kangaroo near their watering places, &c., in stiff soil, four or five feet deep, so narrow that the animal once in gets wedged up and has no room to spring out. Smaller animals are speared in their lairs, or caught with the wild dog, which they manage to domesticate or half tame. Opossums are found by carefully examining the trees for signs of fresh tracks, which are distinguished from old ones by blowing sharply on the bark, watching whether a few grains of sand fall, which may have clung to the tree on the ascent of the animal wet with the dew of the night or any slight shower.

Fish are speared, taken in weirs made of brushwood and poles, three to six feet in depth. Neither nets nor boats were used when we first landed here. Nets are used to the North, made from spinifex, or bark of trees.

THEIR QUARRELS

Are too often decided by the spear, if serious; and a man that has given sufficient cause has to stand and allow himself to be thrown at several times. They are so skilful in avoiding a spear that an active native will "gwel-gan" or dodge a number of spears without being struck, or before he gets wounded, if thrown one at a time, but the Kylee (Boomerang, or half-moon stick) puzzles them by its rapid rotary motion, and cuts a fearful wound when it strikes. It is not near so useful to them nor under the same command as the spear. These, with the stone-set (in gum) Hammer, and Club (Weer-ba, Dow-ak, or Waddie), are their principal WEAPONS; and their

IMPLEMENTS

Are a stone-set (in gum) chisel, knives made with sharp pieces of quartz, also set in hard gum of the tough-topped Xanthorea or Black Boy (grass tree). Bone needles or skewers, and awls or piercers, made of same material with the aid of rough hard bark, sand, shells, &c., form their stock of rough tools.

MARRIAGES.

The females are betrothed or promised when very young in a certain line of families, or to a particular person in that line, and generally are not supposed to marry or be taken out of it—certainly not to have their own choice. The brother of a deceased native has a right to the widow if he is willing to take her. The women seldom have twins, and appear to have very few children after intercourse with white men.

THEIR HUTS

Are made from bark of trees, grass tree (or blackboy tree) tops, or whatever may be at hand; the earth being heaped around the bottom part outside, to keep out the wind and rain.

LANGUAGE.

There are three dialects used in the neighbourhood of the settled districts: the Lowland, the Mountain, and the Northern,—besides the Champion Bay dialect.

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Of the Language runs thus, and does not always appear to advantage, and in regular order:—

EXAMPLES.

Where are you going?	<i>Nhyn-nee yaan bard-din?</i> You (are) where going.
Why are you going?	<i>Nyte-juk nhynnee bard-din?</i> Why or what for (are) you going.
For Kangaroo.	<i>Yowart uk.</i> Kangaroo for
For Mullet.	<i>Gal-gudda uk.</i> Mullet for
For Spears.	<i>Gid-jee uk.</i> Spears for
When will you return?	<i>Myre-a nam-un garoo mun bard-din?</i> (Fingers or) days how many return. or, <i>Nam-un bidjar wundaga garoo yool.</i> How many sleep down return here.
Are you sulky or not?	<i>Nhynnee gurrang gaduk ka yoo-a-da?</i> You anger have or not.
I am not sulky, merely going along.	<i>Anya gurrangbroo; yag-ga bard-din.</i> I anger have not (am) merely going.
Have you a cloak or not?	<i>Nhynnee booga gaduk ka yoo-a-da?</i> You cloak have or not.

EXERCISE.

When we first landed here we wanted to be friendly with you natives. Why were you so angry. Why did you spear the white people? We did not want to kill you, or hurt you in any way. Why would you not be friends and let us learn your language. We could shew you how to use a gun, make nets, boats, and many other things, but you set yourselves against us for years, until you found we were the strongest; otherwise you would have killed us all, as you killed the other white people.

Nganneel ingar-ingar nhalla bart nginnaga, nganneel gurrangbroo na-broo; goordoo gwabba
We at first here came reside we angry not, and so on; heart good
nurang-uk; nurang nyte-juk gnalleckuk delluk-a bart? Nyte-juk nurang nganneel in yaga yaga daanugga?
you to; you why us hate? Why you us without cause speared?
Nganneel nureel en gurrang kattege-broo booma-broo na-broo. Nurang nyte-juk goordoo wendang?
We you in anger thought not, beat not, and so on. You why heart bad?
Nganneel garoo nureeluk mya gete kattege met-in. Nganneel garoo nureelin gun gwabbyne
We then your language soon understand correctly. We then you gun good (use)
wurrung-un; net, na may wurrungun, boat ware na ware nyteby nyteby na
shew or tell; net, and such like, shew tell, boat and such (like) and numerous nameless things,
gwabbyne ware warra. Garoo nureel nganneeluk gurrang moordooit. Muggore, Beroke, boola,
good and common. But you us angry strong. Winter, Summer, many,
garoo ngallutta boondojol bukadge; nureel garoo wangga—Nah! Djanga moordooit-jil. Minning ngullata
then we really fought; you then said—Ah! the whites strong. If we
babba, nurang goora nganneel in booma, moondang-un-un waam-ma mogin.
weak, you long time ago us kill, all others like.

FRANCIS FRASER ARMSTRONG,

Government Interpreter to the Native Tribes of Western Australia.