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THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES  
OF  
PORT LINCOLN  
IN  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA,  
THEIR MODE OF LIFE, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, ETC.

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## THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES OF PORT LINCOLN.

IT has been remarked, that the numbers and condition of the natives of Australia are in general dependent upon the nature of the country they inhabit; where the latter is of a barren description, the natives will be found to be few in number, and of an inferior external appearance; while in the opposite case, they will be comparatively numerous, well-looking and active. With the truth of this observation anyone will be struck, who has had an opportunity of comparing the natives of this district with the Adelaide, and more particularly the Murray, tribes; the former being, upon the whole, fewer, smaller and thinner, less skilful, and less united, in a social point of view, than the latter.

### EXTERNAL APPEARANCE.

The height of the Port Lincoln Aborigines is considerably below the European standard; a tall-looking black will seldom be found to exceed the height of a middle-sized white man, and with regard to size, the comparison is still more against them, so that one may safely venture to say that the tallest and strongest of them would present but a poor figure among a regiment of grenadiers. If it were not for their thin arms and legs, deep-set eyes, large ugly mouths and flattened noses, the Port Lincoln natives might be called a well-proportioned, compact race of men. They certainly have good foreheads, fine shoulders, and particularly high chests. The male sex exhibit a great deal of unstudied natural grace in their deportment, their walk is

perfectly erect and free, motions of body easy, and gestures natural under all circumstances, whether speaking, fighting or dancing; and with regard to agility, they throw the white man completely into the shade. Of the women, however, one cannot speak so favourably, their persons being generally disfigured by very thin extremities, protruding abdomen, and dependent breasts, a condition that may perhaps be sufficiently accounted for by their early marrying, inferior food, and long suckling of children, it being by no means uncommon to see a child of three or four years still enjoying its mother's breast. Although to a passing observer the Aborigines of this district may appear all of the same stamp, yet, upon a longer acquaintance with them, considerable difference will be found to exist, not only with regard to size and make, but also in the colour of their skins; while the northern tribes, who inhabit a scrubby country, generally exhibit very dark and dry-looking skins, one often meets among those from the south and west, with faces that might be almost called copper-coloured. Whether this be owing to the influence of climate or food I will not venture to determine; but I think I have observed that the strongest and best fed natives are always of the lightest colour.

#### DRESS.

The dress of the Port Lincoln natives consists simply of one or two kangaroo skins, and but rarely of rugs made of wallaby, opossum, or other furs, the preparation of which is performed in the following simple way: —As soon as the skin is taken from the animal it is firmly stretched on a level spot of ground by means of pegs inserted round the edge, the flesh side being upwards; when it is dry all fleshy substances that adhere to the skin are gently pulled or shaved off with a sharp-edged piece of quartz, it is then rubbed with the rough surface of an ironstone, which makes it both soft and pliable. The skins are then sewn together with the sinews from a kangaroo's tail, holes for this purpose being made with a thin pointed bone. Some of the rugs thus constructed are well enough, but upon the whole they are

neither so large nor so well made as those worn by the Adelaide tribe. As the skins are not tanned the natives take care not to allow the flesh side of their cloaks to become wet, which would make them hard and stiff; they therefore always turn the hairy side outwards in rainy weather. The best rugs are always worn by the women, especially if they have small children, whom they serve at the same time for a covering, either sitting on the mother's back while travelling, or in her lap at the camp. Such children as are no longer carried are generally worst off for clothing, being either quite naked, or covered only with a small piece of a worn-out rug. More for ornament than for any apparent comfort, the men wear a quantity of yarn on their heads, woven several times round so as to leave only the crown uncovered. The yarn is usually spun of opossum fur or human hair on a sort of distaff, two feet long and not thicker than a goose quill, having towards one end a short cross piece to wind the ready spun yarn upon. Those who wish to appear very smart embellish this ornament still further by placing a bunch of emu feathers in it, above the forehead. On festive occasions, such as the meeting of two strange tribes, they put into this yarn two green sticks stripped of the bark, and covered with white shavings, that make them appear like plumes, fixing one behind each ear and allowing the upper end to incline forward. This ornament, combined with the white and red paint on the chest and arms, is, in my opinion, very much in character with a savage people, expressing a rude pomp that almost borders on the ferocious. I have observed this ornament only among the north-western tribe, to whom it may perhaps be confined. The tip of the tail of a wild dog or wallaby is often attached to the taper end of the beard, and the whole tail of a wild dog tied round the head, is considered very ornamental. Those natives that live amongst Europeans are fond of substituting for the last-mentioned ornament a white or gay coloured rag, or even a bit of paper. Round the waist the men invariably wear a belt or girdle of some sort, it is generally of human hair spun into yarn, and afterwards twisted into a rope about half an inch

thick, sometimes interwoven with emu feathers; but if they cannot obtain one of this sort they will use any kind of string rather than wear none at all. They draw it tight at all times, but especially when they are hungry, for the purpose, as they say, of staying their stomachs, or of rendering the craving of hunger less painful.

#### PAINTING.

The cosmetics used by the Aborigines of this district are of different sorts; the one most esteemed and universally applied by both sexes is grease. If they have an abundance of it, they will anoint the whole body, but in times of scarcity they confine themselves to the face. I have no doubt that they derive considerable comfort from this practice, particularly in hot weather, as I have often seen them beg very earnestly for a piece of fat, and as often heard them compare the custom to the washing of white men. The paints they employ in setting off the beauty of their persons are three, namely, black, white, and red. The first and last of these are obtained from places far to the north, and consist of a soft kind of stone, of which they scrape some powder, and rub it on their previously greased faces, arms, and breasts, when the paint, particularly the black, assumes a shining and metallic hue. As a substitute for the black paint, the cinders of a burnt grass-tree are sometimes used, which produce a deep black but much duller colour than the metallic paint. The white paint is a soft kind of chalk or pipeclay, and is only applied on particular occasions, such as dancing and mourning. How they ornament themselves with this paint for dancing I shall afterwards have an opportunity to describe; when in mourning, the women paint their foreheads, draw a ring round their eyes, and a perpendicular stripe on the stomach; while the men only put it on their foreheads, and at other times on their breasts, in different shapes, such as lines or dots, in order to indicate how near a relative the deceased was to them. The black paint is said to indicate mourning also, but I cannot say in what particular cases. It is, however, clear that under the same circumstances the natives do not all paint alike, as the deceased must

of necessity have stood in a different relationship to the several survivors, which the various modes of painting are meant to denote.

## WEAPONS.

The weapons of the Port Lincoln tribes are rather clumsily made, but yet fully as efficacious as those of the Adelaide natives. Their spears are made of thin gum-scrub saplings, seven or more feet long, and are straightened in hot ashes. The root end, which is about as thick as a man's thumb, is pointed, being previously hardened in the fire, and at the taper end a small hole is bored by means of a sharp kangaroo bone, into which the catch of the wommara is hooked in throwing the spear. To prevent the edge of the hole splitting or breaking away, a thin kangaroo sinew is firmly tied round it. Of the bundle of spears that each man carries about with him, two or three are generally barbed, and for those that are not they have ready-made barbs in their knapsacks, to be fixed to the spears when required. This barb is merely a chip of wood two inches in length, pointed at both ends, and so shaped that when the one end is laid even with the point of the spear, the other projects from it at a sharp angle, thus forming a hook, similar to one side of a harpoon. Although it is fixed to the spear only by a thin thread of sinew, yet it is so secure that it will never slip, and it is impossible to draw a barbed spear out of the body of a man or animal. This weapon is always used in spearing game, but the natives seem to consider it very reprehensible to use a barbed spear in fight. All these spears are thrown with the wooden lever, known by the name of wommara, but here called midla, and the only other kind in use is the winna, which is only five feet long, very strong and clumsy, and only made use of in spearing large fish. The midla is about two feet long and as many inches broad, the upper end is rather pointed, and a small peg is fixed by means of sinews and gum on the inside, to serve as a catch for the hole in the small end of the spear. The handle end has a broad sharp-edged piece of quartz attached to it with gum, which answers the double purpose of pointing the spears, and also of preventing the instrument from

slipping through the hand. The inside, on which the spear rests, is slightly hollowed out, while the outside is round, and both are rudely ornamented with little grooves. The midla is made of a long chip from the smooth and round trunk of a sheoak. The wirris, by the whites incorrectly called waddies, are also made of gum saplings; they are eighteen inches in length, and barely one inch in diameter, the thin end is notched in order to afford a firm hold for the hand, while towards the other end there is a slight gradual bend like that of a sword; they are, however, without knobs, and every way inferior to the wirris of the Adelaide tribes. The natives use this weapon principally for throwing at kangaroo rats or other small animals, and also at the commencement of a fight before they take to their spears. The kiatta or grubbing stick is a gum or sheoak sapling, five feet long and two inches in diameter; the thick end of it is hardened in the fire, and by means of a rough stone a broad and sharp edge is given to it. The use of this stick is sufficiently indicated by its name, namely, to dig up roots, and as this is mainly the employment of the women, it is their constant companion. The wadna is the boomerang of other Australian tribes, only that it is longer, thinner, and clumsier; it is used solely for striking fish in the water, and seldom carried about by the natives, but is generally left at the fishing places. The most singular implement in use with the Port Lincoln tribes—and peculiar to them, I believe, as I have not met with a notice of it anywhere else—is the yuta, a large piece of bark about four feet long, eight to ten inches wide, and presenting the form of an open round water-spout; its use is to clean the grubs of a large species of ant. When an ant-hill is opened it will be found to contain, among a mass of rubbish and innumerable small red insects, here and there a large white grub. These are the only ones fit for eating, but as it would be tedious to pick them out with the hand the natives put as much of the whole mass into the yuta as it will hold, and commence throwing it up and catching it again, holding the yuta all the time in a position slightly deviating from the horizontal. By this process all heavy substances



will gradually separate and fall out of the vessel at its lower end, while the lighter particles seek the raised end, and thus leave, at last, the eatable grubs cleaned in the middle. The grubs are already possessed of life at the time when the natives eat them, and it is on this account probably, that they wrap them up in a clean bit of dry grass, which they chew and suck until they have got all the nutriment out of it, taking enormous mouthfuls each time. It requires a great deal of dexterity to handle the yuta properly, so as to lose none of the white grubs, and get them thoroughly clean; while little native children, six or seven years old, understand this business very well, I have never seen a white man succeed in imitating them. The grub is in season about September, and it is therefore only at that time that the yuta is seen among the natives.

All the above weapons and implements are with other things packed in the knapsack which is carried under the left arm, being by one or more strings slung over the shoulder. It is either a mere kangaroo skin, drawn together by a string like a purse, or a coarse net, manufactured of the fibres of rushes. The smaller articles contained in the knapsack are: —a large flat shell for drinking, a round smooth stone for breaking the bones of animals, one or more kinds of paint, a wooden scoop used in roasting roots, some pieces of quartz, and the whole skin of some animal which answers for a purse to keep minute things in, such as kangaroo sinews and pointed bones of various sizes (serving for needles and thread), sharp-edged thin bones to peel roots with, tufts of feathers, tips for beards, strings, spear-barbs, &c. To prevent these from falling through the meshes of the net, the inside of it is lined with dry grass. Besides the articles mentioned, the natives carry roots and whatever game they pick up during the day in the nurti, as the wallet is called by them, and on the top of all they place their weapons, entwining them in such a manner in the string that closes the knapsack that they cannot slip. The knapsacks of the women differ in no way from those of the men, except that they are larger and, when full and heavy, are carried by them on the back by a breast-band across the chest.

Some men also carry a native knife, called bakki bakkiti, made of a large piece of quartz fixed to one end of a stick with resin. There is one more instrument to be mentioned, of a more sacred and mysterious use: this is the witarna, an oval chip of wood, say eighteen inches long and three or four broad, smooth on both sides and not above half an inch thick. By a long string which passes through a hole at one end, the native swings it round his head through the air, when it gradually, as the string becomes twisted, produces a deep unearthly sound, interrupted at intervals and anon breaking forth again with increased intensity. From the women and children the witarna is carefully concealed; and whenever it is heard, which is only at their mysterious ceremonies, the women know that they must not approach.

#### FOOD.

It has been asserted that the Aborigines of this country will eat anything. This opinion has probably arisen from seeing them eat many things which to an European would be very disgusting, such as grubs, foul eggs, intestines of animals, &c. Yet there are articles of food relished by white men that a native would not touch; for instance, some kinds of fish, oysters, or shell-fish of any kind, the common mushroom, &c., although they eat almost all other kinds of fungus. The natives divide their food into two general classes, namely, paru, which denotes animal food of every description, and mai, which comprises all vegetable nutriment. To the latter class belong a variety of roots, such as ngamba, ngarruru, nilai, winnu, and other kinds, which are nearly all of the size and shape of a small carrot or radish. These are all roasted in hot ashes, and peeled before they are eaten, and have more or less a bitter taste. The only root known to me as eaten in a raw state is that of the grass-tree, which grows in great abundance on the barren hills and plains of Port Lincoln, and is consumed by the natives in prodigious quantities at different seasons of the year. It is by no means unpleasant to the palate but contains, probably, very little nourishment. Several kinds of the fungus tribe are also consumed raw. Though this country

is almost entirely destitute of indigenous fruits of any value to an European, yet there are various kinds which form very valuable and extensive articles of food for the Aborigines; the most abundant and important of these is the fruit of a species of cactus, very elegantly styled pig's-faces by the white people, but by the natives called karkalla. The size of the fruit is rather less than that of a walnut, and it has a thick skin of a pale reddish colour, by compressing which, the glutinous sweet substance inside slips into the mouth. When it is in season, which is from January to the end of summer, a comparatively glorious life begins for the Aborigines; hunger can never assail them, as this fruit is abundant all over the grassy part of the country, and they never tire of it; the men gather only as much as they want to eat at the time, but the women bring great quantities of it home to the camp, to be eaten at night. The other kinds of fruit that the natives eat grow on small trees or shrubs, in the shape of berries or pods. Some of these are allowed to ripen—as the native peach, cherry, wadnirri berry (found on the sea-beach), the karrambi berry (growing on the besom-tree), &c., while others are gathered before they are ripe, and roasted in hot ashes, as, for instance, the myarri and pulbulla, cherries, and the menka and nondo, beans. The last-mentioned fruit, which is much prized by the natives, grows in abundance among the sand-hills between Coffin and Sleaford Bays, where it every year attracts a large concourse of tribes, and generally gives occasion for a fight. As a proof how much this bean is valued it may be mentioned that the Kukata tribe, notorious for ferocity and witchcraft, often threaten to burn or otherwise destroy the nondo bushes in order to aggravate their adversaries. As the wattle does not grow in Port Lincoln, at least not to any extent, there is but little eatable gum, which constitutes such an important article of food for the Adelaide tribes. The willow, and another shrub named perrenye, exude, indeed, some gum of the colour and transparency of sugar-candy, but they grow only in certain localities, and the quantity is comparatively limited.

Every description of game, from the kangaroo down to the smallest marsupial species, and all kinds of birds, from the emu to the wren, constitute food for the Aborigines of this district, nor are snakes and other reptiles by any means despised. The commonest method of procuring wild animals is to approach them unseen and spear them unawares. In order to effect this, some artifices are employed to divert the attention of the animal, such as one man stationing himself in an open space at a distance, or hiding himself in a bush and making a slight noise by breaking sticks or otherwise, while the huntsman is creeping nearer and nearer until he has his victim within reach of his spear. This is the usual way of killing kangaroos, emus, and wild dogs; but in winter, when the ground is soft, the kangaroos are pursued till they are tired out, and are then killed with waddies, or if a great number of natives be collected, as is often the case in summer, they surround a district of country known to contain kangaroo, and by shouting, and gradually drawing closer, drive them towards the spot where other men are concealed and prepared to spear the game as it passes them; and if near the sea-coast, they hunt the poor animals upon a point of land, where they are easily speared, or if they take to the sea, as I am told they sometimes will do, their enemies will pursue, even in this element, by swimming after them. The smaller animals, as wallaby and kangaroo-rats that live in the scrub, are knocked down with waddies while running away. To start them from their lairs, a whole district is set on fire, before which the hunters take their places, or if the bush be not dry enough to burn, they spread out in line, firing here and there a dry patch, and hurling their waddies at the scared animals. Where the scrub is low, each man has a tuft of feathers at the butt end of a spear, which he plants upright near the bush that he knows to contain some animal, and as soon as the others see this signal they come to surround and thus make sure of the game. They have also a great number of manual signs, by which they can indicate the description of game in sight without speaking. Thus, pointing with the forefinger, while the rest are closed, and making a motion that reminds one of the hopping of

a kangaroo, indicates that animal; three fingers extended, the middle one dropping a little below the other two, denotes an emu; four fingers shut, and the thumb only extended, means an opossum; the whole hand extended and held horizontally on edge shows that fish are seen. They have as many similar signs as there are kinds of game, employing a different one for each. Opossums and native cats are hunted in moonlight nights when the heavens are lightly clouded, for in perfectly clear nights the natives maintain the animals see them at a distance, and run to their holes in the rocks before they come up. In hunting opossums, the tamed native dogs are of great service, as they not only catch the animals when dropping from the trees, but also scent and take the natives to the game. If a kangaroo-rat is found in a hole or under a rock, and they can neither reach it with their hands nor with sticks, a fire is made at the mouth of the opening, until the animal is driven out or overpowered by the smoke.

The natives of Port Lincoln are not so expert in procuring fish as those of other parts of the colony, for they neither use nets nor hooks. The larger kinds are speared, while the smaller sorts, particularly those that move about in shoals, are surrounded by a number of natives, each being provided with a branch of tea-tree, and slowly driven towards the shore, where they are secured by placing the branches round them and throwing them upon the sand. Some kinds of fish are attracted in the night by a light, knowing which, the natives go into the water with lighted torches of long, dry pieces of bark, and procure great quantities of them. Great excitement prevails among the natives when they are successful in hunting or fishing, each one exclaiming on those occasions, *Ngaitye paru, ngaitye paru, i e.*, "my meat, my meat!" patting his stomach all the time vigorously. Many eulogiums are also bestowed on him to whose skill they owe the feast in prospect. All kinds of meat and fish are roasted on the fire; large animals, such as kangaroos, are skinned and cut into joints, but the smaller sorts are thrown on the fire without being skinned, unless the natives want to save the fur for cloaks. When the

hair is well singed off they are taken from the fire again, and the inside is taken out, and is generally handed over to the women and children. The superstitious simplicity of the Aborigines is peculiarly displayed in hunting and distributing game. They have a number of distiches, handed down to them by their ancestors, and known only to the grown-up men, which are rapidly pronounced when they are going to pursue or spear an animal. The literal meaning of these charms, or imprecations, as the natives term them, is probably unknown to themselves, since they are unable to explain it; but the object and confidently believed effect of them is, to throw the animal off its guard, so that it may not observe its enemy, or to weaken it, that it may not be able to escape from its pursuers. Another object in pronouncing these formulas appears to be, to remove the game from common use, or to render imperative the observance of their traditional laws with regard to animal food. The general principle of these laws is this, that the male of any animal should be eaten by grown-up men, the female by women, and the young animal by children only. An exception, however, is made with respect to the common kangaroo-rat, which may be eaten promiscuously. The wallaby, especially that species called by the natives yurridni, and the two species of bandicoot, kurkulla and yartiri, must on no account be eaten by young men and young women, as they are believed to produce premature menses in the latter, and discolour the beards of the former, giving them a brown tinge instead of a shining black. That the last-mentioned laws are strictly adhered to, I have had frequent opportunities of observing; but, as regards the general principle, I am afraid it is often disregarded, to the professed great grief of the men, who thence will sometimes take occasion to reprehend the young generation for their unprincipled conduct, declaring, at the same time, that in their own youth they scrupulously abstained from forbidden meat. Guanas and lizards are proper food for girls, as accelerating maturity, and snakes for women, promoting fecundity.

The life of a hunter is necessarily a roving one under any circumstances, but more particularly so in a country which yields

its scanty natural products in different localities, and at different seasons of the year. On this account the Port Lincoln natives are compelled sometimes to range up and down the sea-coast, looking for fish; sometimes to travel over hill and dale, hunting and digging roots; and, during the driest months of the year, the impervious, scrubby deserts are traversed by them, for the purpose of procuring small game, in spite of excessive heat and want of water. To assuage the burnings of thirst, under such circumstances, they resort to the expedient of covering their bodies with earth, which is said to cool them, and answer the same purpose as drinking water. Fifteen to twenty miles is about the distance they travel in a day, the men often taking circuitous roads, while the women and children, many of whom have to be carried, are taken straight to the intended camping place, under the protection and guidance of one or more men. They seem never in a hurry to start in the morning, and it usually requires a great deal of talking and urging, on the part of the more eager, before a movement is made. When arrived at the camp, which is always some time before sunset, the first thing to be done is to make a fire and roast the small animals that the men may have killed (kangaroo, and other large game, being roasted on the spot where it is killed, and, what is not eaten then, carried piecemeal to the camp. ) After the meat is consumed, the women produce the roots or fruit picked up by them during the day; and this dessert also over, the rest of the evening is spent in talking, singing, or dancing. In summer and fine weather, they only put a few branches on the ground, in a semi-circular shape, to serve as a breakwind; but, in rainy weather, they construct huts of sheoak branches, in the shape of a deep niche, giving them as much pitch as possible to promote the running down of the water. A fire is always kept burning in front of the hut to keep their feet warm during the night; and, in cold weather, each individual has a small heap of burning coals in front, and at the back; as the least shifting will bring them in close contact with these coals, it frequently happens that they burn themselves severely. The length of time that they stay in a camp

depends partly on the locality, partly on the quantity of food near it. There are in the Port Lincoln district many isolated wells and holes in rocks containing water; while, for thirty or more miles round, there may not be a drop to be found; so that the natives are compelled to resort to the same camp so long as they remain in the neighbourhood. Again, on favourable fishing grounds, they will sometimes protract their stay in one camp from ten days to a fortnight, but never longer. As they travel much more in summer than in winter, they change their camping places more frequently during that season. Each family occupies a separate hut; and, if there be any young unmarried men, they sleep apart in a hut of their own.

#### MARRIAGE AND NOMENCLATURE.

The Aborigines of this portion of the province are divided into two distinct classes, viz., the Mattiri, and Karraru people. This division seems to have remained among them from time immemorial, and has for its object the regulation of marriages; none being allowed within either of these classes, but only between the two; so that if a husband be Mattiri, his wife must be Karraru, and *vice versa*. The distinction is kept up by the children taking invariably the appellation of that class to which their mother belongs. There is not an instance of two Mattiri or Karraru being married, although they do not seem to consider less virtuous connections between parties of the same class incestuous. There are of course other limitations to marriage between nearly related people besides this general distinction; but it is very difficult to ascertain them, on account of the innumerable grades of consanguinity that arise from polygamy, and from frequent interchanging and repudiating of wives. Besides, friendship among the natives assumes always the forms and names of relationship, which renders it almost impossible to find out the difference between real or merely adopted relatives. The mode of marrying is the most unceremonious in the world. Long before a young girl arrives at maturity, she is affianced by her parents to some friend of theirs, no matter whether young



or old, married or single, and as soon as she shows symptoms of puberty, she is bid to follow him without any further ceremony, and without consulting her own inclinations. Fortunately for the young females, it will not unfrequently happen, that a jealous old matron violently opposes her husband dividing his affections between herself and her young rival, and thus compels him to transfer his claim to some young fellow who will gladly relieve him of his burden. It sometimes occurs that a young man, desperately in love, or fancying that his pretensions are well founded, takes a woman from another man by force; often killing the latter without any compunction, if he cannot otherwise effect his purpose. The loose practices of the Aborigines, with regard to the sanctity of matrimony, form the worst trait in their character; although the men are capable of fierce jealousy, if their wives transgress unknown to them, yet they frequently send them out to other parties, or exchange with a friend for a night; and, as for near relatives, such as brothers, it may almost be said that they have their wives in common. While the sending out of the women for a night seems to be regarded as an impropriety by the natives themselves, the latter practice is a recognised custom, about which not the least shame is felt. A peculiar nomenclature has arisen from these singular connections; a woman honours the brothers of the man to whom she is married with the indiscriminate name of husbands; but the men make a distinction, calling their own individual spouses *yungaras*, and those to whom they have a secondary claim, by right of brotherhood, *kartetis*. Notwithstanding the early marriage of females, I have not observed that they have children at an earlier age than is common among Europeans. The number of children reared by each family is of course variable, but, in general, very limited, rarely exceeding four. If a mother have children in rapid succession, which, however, does not appear to be frequently the case, the young infant is killed by some other woman, who accompanies the mother on these occasions to a distance from the other natives. From the greater number of male children reared one may infer that not so many of them

are killed at their birth as of the female sex. In extenuation of this horrible practice the women allege that they cannot suckle and carry two babies at once, while the men wash their hands in innocence by maintaining that they are never present at these murders, and that the women alone are to blame. Although both sexes are very fond of their living offspring, yet the mothers are very careless, often allowing their children to burn themselves so badly that there are few adults who have not a more or less disfiguring mark about them received during infancy. The Aborigines have a simple method of naming their children, derived from the successive number of births by each mother. For instance: the first-born child, if a male, is named Piri; if a female, Kartanya. The second, if a boy, Warri; if a girl Warruyu, and so on to the number of six or seven names for either sex. Besides these names, which are confined to more familiar use, corresponding exactly with our Christian names, each child receives the name of the place where it was born. Both these names are retained through life, but in addition to them the males receive a third name about the age of puberty, with a great many mysterious and ceremonious observances, a description of which will be given further on.

#### MEDICAL TREATMENT.

Although living in a healthy climate and on wholesome food, yet the natives are not entirely free from diseases; those they are most subject to, besides wounds, are colds, diarrhoea, and headaches. They employ various external means with a view either of removing the disease or of affording temporal relief from pain, some of which seem appropriate enough. The principal of them are pressing or manipulating the patient's body, especially the abdomen, and even gently treading it with the feet; drawing the belt round the waist, and the bandage round the head, very tight; sprinkling with cold water in cases of fever or local inflammation; fomenting the anus with the previously heated green leaves of the currant tree, in cases of diarrhoea; bleeding on the lower arm for the relief of severe headache. The last-

mentioned remedy is confined to the male sex, and by them very commonly resorted to during the hot season, even when in good health. None of the blood is allowed to drop on the ground, but it is carefully made to run on another man's body in such a manner as to form a number of thin transverse lines, representing the appearance of a regular network. The object of this custom is partly to remove disease, as inflammation and headache, partly to promote the growth of young people, and preserve the vigour of older men. The women are on no account allowed to bleed, or even to see the men when bled; and when the latter are exercising this secret privilege of theirs, the *witarna* is sounded to give the women and uninitiated young people notice not to approach. Independent of these empiricisms, which may be applied by anybody, the Aborigines have doctors among them called *Mintapas*, who pretend that they can cure disease by sucking it out of the body. If the evil be general they apply their lips to the pit of the stomach, or if local to the part affected, and after sucking a while they take out of their mouths a small piece of wood or bone, which they make the patient and bystanders believe to be the malady, sucked by them out of the body. Such is the superstition of these ignorant people that they not only firmly believe in this mummery, but also vehemently expostulate with you if you express a doubt, or hint that the *mintapas* have previously put the wood produced by them into their mouths. Among the tribes in the immediate vicinity of Port Lincoln the *mintapas* are rare, but the famous *Kukata* tribe, to the north-west, are said to harbour many of such workers of miracles. External wounds are generally left to heal of their own accord, the most that they do to them is to wrap something very tightly round the injured part, to press the adjoining parts occasionally, and sprinkle them with cold water if inflamed. The natives show a deal of sympathy with sick people, especially the women, who vent their feelings by a plentiful effusion of tears and vigorous manipulation of the painful parts, while the patients, even in desperate cases, display very often a degree of stoical fortitude that old Zeno himself might have envied.

## CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES.

It is a curious fact, as well as a strong proof of the degraded social condition of the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, that they have no chief, or any persons of acknowledged superior authority among them. All grown-up men are perfectly equal, and this is so well understood that none ever attempt to assume any command over their fellows; but whatever wishes they may entertain with regard to the conduct and actions of others, they must be expressed in the shape of entreaty or persuasion. Considerable deference, however; is shown to the old men by the younger generation, proceeding, perhaps, partly from the respect which superior age and experience inspire, but greatly increased and kept up by the superstitious awe of certain mysterious rites, known only to the grown-up men, and to the knowledge of which the young people are only very gradually admitted. The three degrees of initiation through which the youths must pass form so many periods of their lives, and the appellation of the character which each degree confers on them supersedes their ordinary names during the time that intervenes between the ceremonies or immediately follows them. The first initiation takes place about the age of fifteen, when the boys assume the title of Warrara. I have never witnessed the ceremonies attending it, as the natives hitherto were very jealous of strangers being present, from fear that through them the women and children might become acquainted with the mysteries practised. I have been told, however, that the boy is conducted from the camp blindfolded, by one man styled the Yumbo, whose duty it is to attend the warrara during the whole ceremony at some remote place, which must be screened from the eyes of the women and children, who remain behind. When arrived at the spot chosen he is laid down on the ground and covered over with skins, and the yumbo sits down by his side to keep watch over him. The rest of the company now prepare a number of small whips (pullakalli), to the end of which a small chip of wood about ten inches long and half-an-inch broad is attached; by

twisting the string of this whip, and swinging it rapidly through the air, a sudden and piercing sound is produced; not unlike the report of an air-gun. Next, two men procure a heap of green boughs, and hide themselves in it, in front of the spot where the boy is lying, and about twenty paces from it; one of the adults then opens a vein in his arm, causing the blood to run on the warrara's head, face, and shoulders, and a few drops into his mouth. The latter is then told to uncover his eyes, in order to behold a most ludicrous and grotesque spectacle. While one aged man hums a slow and monotonous tune, and three or four others crack the above-described whips (with dire grimaces and furious gesticulations), a slight rustling, which gradually grows louder, is heard among the heap of branches, until at last a veritable black leaps out of them, all fours, biting his beard, wildly rolling his eyes, and assuming altogether an expression and position similar to that of a tiger, just in the act of pouncing upon his prey. At each crack of the whips, the man drops down upon his face, moving neither head nor foot, as if he were dead; but gradually recovering, he raises his head, gives a deep scowl on all around, and throwing now and then some dust about him, slowly moves forward, until another crack is heard, and he drops down again. When arrived at the spot where the warrara is sitting, he leaves the arena, making room for the other man still hidden among the boughs, and who now repeats exactly the same antics: hereupon, all present crowd round the poor warrara, giving him a number of precepts for his future conduct, accompanied by awful threatenings and severe thumps on his chest and sides. Although they assure him that by all this no harm is meant, but that his own good is solely intended, my informant has seen big tears ran down a boy's cheek. The precepts that a warrara is required to observe are these: Not to associate any longer with his mother, or the other women, and the children, but to keep company with the men; to have no quarrels with the women, especially not to waddy, spear, or otherwise ill-treat them; to abstain from forbidden meats, such as lizards, &c.; and not to betray what he has seen and heard on the present occasion; and that if he did not

observe these injunctions, they should spear him, throw him into the fire, or do other dreadful things to him. In the course of the day during the early part of which the ceremony has been performed, the warrara is covered all over with human blood, and on the following morning he is ceremoniously introduced to the women. For this purpose, every man provides himself with a handful of green grass, enclosing in it a few live coals, so as to cause a thick smoke, and they then march in a long single line (having the warrara in the middle), waving the smoking grass, and continually shouting "Erri, Erri, " to the encampment of the women, who during the preceding night have slept separate from the men. On their arrival in front of the women, after describing a wide circle once or twice, they draw up in a solid body, and throw the smoking grass in a heap. This is carried to one of the women who has been especially appointed to receive the warrara, and the latter is conducted backwards to her by his yumbo or attendant, and made to sit down on the heap of grass. She then dries, and rubs with her cloak the back of the warrara, which has been previously covered again with blood; and in conclusion, one of the little boys chases him through a lane formed by the body of men, running after him, shouting, and beating two waddies together. For three or more months after this ceremony, the warrara must keep his face blackened with charcoal, speak in low whispers, and avoid the presence of women.

To illustrate how early, and systematically, the native children are trained to view these ceremonies with feelings of awe, it may be mentioned, that they are never allowed to approach the spot where a warrara has been made; if such a place should happen to fall in the line that the men are travelling, the little boys are directed to take a round, in order to avoid the sacred spot.

About the age of sixteen or seventeen, the second degree, that of a Pardnapa, is conferred on every male. On the morning agreed upon by the men (which is studiously kept secret from the women and children), the appointed attendant of the pardnapa, named Yanmurru, gives the first signal, by embracing the lad

and shouting " Pu, Pu. " Instantly, all the women of the class that the pardnapa happens to belong to, whether matteri, or karraru, jump up, and (apparently with reluctance, but in reality gladly and joyfully), each touches the shoulders and necks of the men of the same class, in order to express their entire approval of the men's intention, to raise a boy of their class to a higher station in life. The women are then directed to move on, while the men tarry behind to procure green boughs; and on their overtaking the women, they trot past them in a line, keeping the pardnapa in the middle, waving their boughs and shouting "Pu, Pu." They then separate again, the women to gather roots or fruits and the men to hunt; which appears to be an essential part of the ceremony. A scrubby district is chosen, and effectually scoured by an extensive line of the hunters; and great numbers of wallaby and rats fall by their well-aimed waddies. The pardnapa, although present, takes no part in the hunt; but goes unarmed. About noon they retire to the nearest watering-place, and after roasting and consuming the game, the pardnapa is ordered to withdraw, accompanied by those lads who last underwent the same ceremony. A circumciser (Yulli) is then appointed; some of the company cover themselves with dust, biting their beards, grunting, and leaping wildly about, suddenly seize on one of the number present, place him on their shoulders, and carry him a little distance; where they lay him down on his back, and with great earnestness endeavour to persuade him to undertake the office. As it appears to be considered an honour by the natives, to be chosen for one of the offices connected with their ceremonies, it is generally conferred on a visitor from a distance should one be present, who, with pretended reluctance, pleads many reasons why he should not have been appointed, such as "want of skill or nerve to perform, the cruel operation," that he "came to see his friends, and by no means expected to have been thus distinguished, " &c., all of which is easily overruled by the general voice, as it appears to proceed more from custom than real modesty. A tree of moderate height is then divested of its branches, and one of the men takes his place in the fork of

it, while the rest crowd round it, placing their hands and heads against its stem, so that their backs assume a horizontal position and present a kind of platform. As soon as it is announced that the pardnapa is brought back from his hiding-place, which is always done blindfold, the whole mass utter an unearthly sound which bears some resemblance to a distant moaning, and during the performance of the operation keep grinding their teeth. The pardnapa is placed backwards on the altar or platform formed by the backs of the men, his arms and legs are stretched out and held fast, and the man sitting in the fork of the tree descends and sits down on his chest, so that he is utterly unable to move one limb of his body. A person well acquainted with the operation, after drawing the foreskin properly forward and causing the circumciser to make only the first incision, completes the business very deliberately with a chip of quartz; while some charm, supposed to have the power of allaying pain, is rapidly pronounced by a few lookers-on. The men then draw up in a line, left foot forward and both hands filled with dust, and gradually move towards the pardnapa, who is now allowed to open his eyes. They do not place one foot before the other in moving, but set their feet alternately only a few inches further, so that the left foot always remains foremost. At each movement, which is performed simultaneously by all, each man throws a little dust into the air, and all of them have, during this parade, their beards in their mouths. In conclusion, every one beats and thumps the poor pardnapa to his heart's desire, enjoining him secrecy with regard to his newly-acquired mysterious knowledge, but assuring him all the while that they mean no harm. On the completion of the ceremony, the men conclude the festive day by another wallaby hunt. The pardnapa, whose hair has previously been allowed to grow to a great length, now has it secured on the crown of his head in a cap of net-work manufactured of opossum's hair; and over the pubes he wears a fringe or tassel made of the same material: these sacred badges are worn for many months after the operation, and when the cap is laid aside, the hair is still preserved, and suffered to fall down in long matted locks.



Another operation, peculiar to the Aborigines of Port Lincoln, is also performed at this period, though without any particular ceremony. It consists of a cut, with a chip of quartz, from the orifice of the penis, along its lower side down to the scrotum, thus laying the passage open in its whole length. The object of this strange mutilation I have never been able to ascertain. In support of a practice so essentially barbarous, the natives have nothing to say more than that "it was observed by their forefathers, and must therefore be upheld by themselves."

The third and most important degree in these superstitious mysteries is taken about the age of eighteen, which allows the youths to take the name of Wilyalkinyis. I have seen this ceremony performed twice, and am therefore enabled to give a more detailed account of it. A day or two previous, Indanyanas, a sort of sponsors, are appointed, whose duty it is to perform the customary rites on the wilyalkinyis. The appointment is made by one person laying the indanyana backwards in his lap, when several others come round and entreat him to assume the office; a distinction that he all the while protests to be very averse to. As the festive ceremonies of the Aborigines always take place in summer, when great numbers of them are collected, and as none have any command over the rest, a great deal of eloquence and mutual urging is required to put the lazy multitude into motion; so that the rites which could be conveniently gone through in one hour, generally occupy the greatest part of the day. The initiation of wilyalkinyis commences with their being taken blindfold and unawares from the camp, to the pretended great sorrow of the women, who immediately set up a feigned lamentation; while the youths are conducted by their sponsors to a short distance. Here the latter station themselves for at least one hour in a circle, shutting the youths' eyes with both hands, and uttering simultaneously at intervals of about ten minutes a long monotonous wail, which may, perhaps, be represented as near as possible by these characters: —Yai-a-ay. The lads are next led still further from and out of sight of the camp, laid flat on the ground and covered up with cloaks; after lying there for another

hour, two men procure a number of green boughs, the boys are again raised on their feet, but still blindfolded, by their indan-yanas, and all the rest of the men range themselves in a half-circle. Placing themselves opposite to the open side of the semicircle, and assuming the attitudes and gestures of violent rage, the two men with the boughs throw them over the heads of the wilyalkinyis, which the rest accompany with beating of waddies and uttering a number of short shouts, dwelling only on the last, every time that a branch falls to the ground, in this manner—Ye, ye ye, yay. The lads are now laid on the green boughs and covered up again, when the company very leisurely and deliberately commence preparing chips of quartz for tattooing the wilyalkinyis, and inventing new names by which they are to be called during their future lives. This last-mentioned business is always attended with great difficulty, as the new name must not only be agreeable to their ideas of euphony, but also quite original, or such as has not previously belonged to any other person. In most cases these names are roots of verbs, augmented by the termination -alta, or -ulta, according to the terminating vowel of the dissyllabic root. Whether these endings affect the meaning of the words in any way, must remain a matter of speculation, as they never occur but in proper names. The natives have no objection to be assisted in the invention of names, but they will be careful to select out of the number mentioned to them, only such as they think are appropriate and new. Everything being prepared, several men open veins in their lower arms, while the young men are raised to swallow the first drops of the blood: they are then directed to kneel on their hands and knees, so as to give a horizontal position to their backs, which are covered all over with blood: as soon as this is sufficiently coagulated, one person marks with his thumb the places in the blood, where the incisions are to be made, namely, one in the middle of the neck, and two rows from the shoulders down to the hips, at intervals of about a third of an inch between each cut. These are named Manka, and are ever after held in such veneration, that it would be deemed a great profanation to allude to them in the presence

of women. Each incision requires several cuts with, the blunt chips of quartz to make them deep enough, and is then carefully drawn apart; yet the poor fellows do not shrink, or utter a sound; but I have seen their friends so overcome by sympathy with their pain, that they made attempts to stop the cruel proceedings, which was of course not allowed by the other men. During the cutting, which is performed with astonishing expedition, as many of the men as can find room crowd around the youths, repeating in a subdued tone, but very rapidly, the following formula: —

"Kauwaka kánya márra márra  
Kárndo kánya márra márra  
Pilbirri kánya márra márra ."

This incantation, which is derived from their ancestors, is apparently void of any coherent sense; the object of its repetition, however, is to alleviate the pain of the young men, and to prevent dangerous consequences from the dreadful lacerations. After the incisions are completed on all the youths, they are allowed to stand up and open their eyes, and the first thing they behold is two men coming towards them, stamping, biting their beards, and swinging the witarna with such fury as if they intended to clash it against their heads, but upon approaching, they content themselves with placing the string of that instrument round their necks in succession. Several fires are also made to windward at this time, so that the smoke may be blown upon the young men. In commemoration of the ordeal gone through, the wilyalkinyis are presented with some badges, such as a new girdle round the waist, spun of human hair, a tight bandage round each upper arm, a string of opossum hair round the neck, the end of which descends clown the back, where it is fastened to the girdle, a bunch of green leaves over the pubes, and at last their faces, arms and breasts are painted black. In conclusion, all the men crowd once more round them, each endeavouring to give them some good advice for the proper regulation of their future conduct; the main topics I understood to be these: to abstain from quarrelling and fighting, to forbear talking aloud, and to avoid the women. The

last two injunctions are scrupulously observed till the men release them about four or five months after, during which time they live and sleep separate from the camp, and speak in whispers. The releasing of the wilyalkinyis consists merely in tearing the string, the symbol of silence, from their necks, and covering them over with blood, in the manner that the men adopt at their bleeding ceremonies; and after that they may be looked upon as perfect adepts in all manner of secrets and admissible to all the privileges of grown-up men. The women and children, as has been mentioned already, are by no means allowed to see any of the above ceremonies. They are on those occasions encamped out of sight of the men; but if their business, in fetching water, wood, or anything else, should bring them within sight, they must cover their heads with cloaks and walk in a stooping posture. Any impertinent curiosity on their part is punishable with death, according to the ancient custom; and I have been told that instances have occurred where this dreadful punishment was actually inflicted. As one more proof what mighty importance the Aborigines attach to their absurd mysteries, I may mention that it is deemed very ignominious abuse, if a person of a higher degree upbraids any one with his still occupying a lower station; warrara purra (still a boy of the first degree only), pardnapa purra (only of the second degree), are very offensive expressions.

#### SUPERSTITIONS AND TRADITIONS.

The opinions of the natives with regard to supernatural things and agencies, are very peculiar and interesting. They have as clear a perception of the immateriality and immortality of the soul as could have been expected from them. In order to illustrate the former, they describe it as very small, so minute that it could pass through a crack or crevice; and when a man dies, his soul goes to an island, where it lives in a state so ethereal that it requires no food. Some say that this island is situated towards the east, others towards the west; so that they either do not agree about the locality, or believe in the existence of more than one receptacle for departed souls. On its passage to

its new habitation a species of red-bill, a bird frequenting the sea-beach, and noted for its shrill shrieks during the night, accompanies it. It appears to be a modern idea of theirs, adopted since their knowledge of the existence of a white race of men, that their souls will at a future period become white men. However, such is their belief, and all white people are in their opinion no more than the re-incorporated souls of their forefathers. So firmly persuaded are, or at least were they of this, that they even ventured to identify some settlers with natives long since dead, giving the former the names of the latter. The last words of Ngarbi, a Port Lincoln native, who was executed in Adelaide, were, that "by-and-by he should become a white man," although he had been made acquainted with more correct views. These two apparently contradictory opinions, that an island receives the souls of the departed and that they reappear as white men, may perhaps be quite compatible by the natives assuming that the island is only their temporary abode; which is the more likely, as they certainly believe in the pre-existence of the souls of black men, and also assign the island as their previous abode. I do not think that originally they had any idea of retribution in a future life for actions done in this, but they seem to think that the fate of man in this world is in some degree dependent on his good or bad conduct. The following anecdote will best illustrate their views on the subject: —It was reported by a native that at or near Streaky Bay a black man had been shot by a whaling party for spearing a dog belonging to them, and which had been furiously attacking the native; some time after, the crew of a whaler wrecked in that neighbourhood came overland to Port Lincoln, and when it was hinted that perhaps one of them had shot the black man, the natives at once assigned that act of cruelty as the cause of the shipwreck. The most prominent in the superstitions of the Port Lincoln Aborigines is their belief in the existence of a fiendish monster, named Márralye, who is described as a man who assumes the shape and power of a bird, so that he can fly through the air. He is most feared during the night-time, when he is supposed to pounce upon his

sleeping victims, either killing them by eating their hearts out of their bodies, or doing them some other grievous injury; he takes care, however, not to leave any marks of his ravages, and it is therefore only from the effects, such as pain and illness, that the sufferers know of his nightly visits. The death of children and the loss of sight are usually ascribed to Márralye, if no other palpable cause can be assigned. The Márralye, it is to be observed, has no individual and permanent existence, but is merely the mask or disguise temporarily assumed by wicked men, particularly the Kukata tribe, to enable them to execute their mischievous intentions. Another kind of fabulous beings are the Puskabidnis, whose number seems to be unlimited; they are represented as black men of an enormous size, quite naked, and armed only with waddies; although always bent on bloodshed and murder, they are not so dangerous as the Márralye, since by vigilance and courage they may be conquered. At night the men never move from the camp without taking a spear to protect themselves, in case any of these lurking assassins should be about. Some of the natives boast of having killed Purkabidnis; but I apprehend that they have mistaken black stumps of trees or real natives for these beings, an error that superstitious timidity will occasionally betray them into. I recollect that two natives once pointed out to me a dark object in a thickly-timbered locality, and at several hundred yards' distance, that looked exactly like a black man in a crouching posture; they were satisfied that it was a Purkabidni, and not only strongly objected to go with me to examine it, but also endeavoured to prevent my going by myself: however, upon nearer approach, it turned out to be what I expected to find, namely, a burnt stump, and when I laid my hand upon it they burst out laughing, acknowledging themselves for once mistaken, but nowise shaken in their firm persuasion that such monsters really existed, and had been seen by them on other occasions. That natives, wandering too far into the territories of strange tribes, are sometimes slain as Purkabidnis is not unlikely, and rendered probable from the following account: —Our Port Lincoln natives, when asked if they

could give any information of two black men who had gone with Mr. Eyre to the far west, and returned from thence by themselves, recollected having heard that two strange young men, carrying a peculiar kind of nets or netbags, had been killed by the Kukatas, in the belief of their being Purkabidnis.

The worst kind of superstition, and one that does comparatively as much mischief among the Aborigines as the belief in witchcraft ever did in Europe, is the idea that one person may, from spite or other motives, kill another party by a peculiar manipulation during the night, described as a poking with the fingers in the side of the obnoxious person, which will cause illness, and ultimately death. The evidence by which the guilty party is discovered is generally the deposition of the dying person, who is supposed to know the man who causes his death. In all cases of death that do not arise from old age, wounds, or other equally palpable causes, the natives suspect that unfair means have been practised; and even where the cause of death is sufficiently plain, they sometimes will not content themselves with it, but have recourse to an imaginary one, as the following case will prove:—A woman had been bitten by a black snake, across the thumb, in clearing out a well; she began to swell directly, and was a corpse in twenty-four hours; yet, another woman who had been present when the accident occurred, stated that the deceased had named a certain native as having caused her death. Upon this statement, which was in their opinion corroborated by the circumstance that the snake had drawn no blood from the deceased, her husband and other friends had a fight with the accused party and his friends; a reconciliation, however, took place afterwards, and it was admitted on the part of the aggressors that they had been in error with regard to the guilty individual; but nowise more satisfied as to the bite of the snake being the true cause of the woman's death, another party was now suddenly discovered to be the real offender, and accordingly war was made upon him and his partisans, till at last the matter was dropped and forgotten. From this case, as well as from frequent occurrences of a similar nature, it appears evident that

thirst for revenge has quite as great a share in these foul accusations as superstition. Ignorant of the Supreme disposer of life and death, too little reflective to ascribe their bereavements to a blind fatality, yet susceptible of intense feeling, and superstitious withal, it is, perhaps, not so very wonderful that they should seek the cause of their sorrows within the compass of human agency. Many other superstitions are entertained by the natives, which though not of an equally dangerous tendency, still ascribe undue and mischievous power to man. Thus it is maintained that remote tribes of blacks, especially the Kukatas to the north-west, have the power of producing excessive rain, as well as insufferable heat and drought, and also of causing plagues that kill other tribes by wholesale. To avert heavy rains they employ sometimes a long string of seemingly extempore imprecations, beginning every sentence with the interjection "Sú,"\* expressive of anger, pronouncing the first words rapidly, and chanting—

"Sú, Wattidiritye yakī, yakī:  
Sú, Puyu warraitya, kanō, kanō.  
Sú, yakkirkurraitya, malō, malō,"

and many others, the meaning of which is unknown. The appearance of a comet or any natural phenomenon in the heavens is regarded as the sure harbinger of death, and fills them with awe and terror. In 1843, when the great comet appeared, some acknowledged to have been so frightened that they crept into caves among the rocks.

The Aborigines have a great number of fabulous traditions handed down to them by their forefathers, all of which are characterised by a high degree of improbability and monstrosity, as will be sufficiently apparent from a few that I shall mention: —

I. —Pulyállana was in days of yore a great man, who conferred on succeeding generations the benefit of having given names to many localities in the southern and western parts of this district, which they retain to this day. He had, however, the misfortune to lose both his wives, who absconded from him—an

\* This is the only instance of a sibilant occurring in the language.



event that by no means contributed to keep him in good humour. After a great deal of fruitless search, he at last hit upon their track, and, following it; overtook them somewhere about Cape Catastrophe, where they were both killed by him. They were then converted into stone, together with their children, and all may be seen there at the present day in the shape of rocks and islands; and their breathing or groaning be heard in a cave, into which the roaring sea rushes a long way underground. Pulyállana himself was subsequently raised into the sky, at or near Puyundu (the native name for Cape Sir Isaac), where he is sometimes seized with violent fits of rage. On such occasions he raves and storms about among the clouds, and keeps shouting most lustily, like a native when under the influence of violent passion, thus producing what is commonly called *thunder*. He is armed with waddies, which he used to throw at the natives, particularly the pardnapas, whom he frequently cut through in the middle, hurling the upper and lower parts of the body in opposite directions. Their ancestors, however, entreated him to spare the pardnapas, and hit the sheoaks instead; and this prayer prevailing with him, he now vents his rage on them. The lightning is also his production, being caused by the sudden jerking or opening of his legs in his furious gestures.

II. —The large red species of kangaroo is not to be found at Port Lincoln, although it is said to be plentiful in the north; and, from the following legend, it would appear that one of the species had found its way to the south of this district: —Kupirri was the name of this animal, which is said to have been of a stupendous size, and to have devoured all those who attempted to spear it. Its very appearance inspired the natives of old with overwhelming terror, so that they lost all presence of mind, flinging away the wooden lever (*midla*) with the spear, which was thereby, of course, prevented from taking effect. At last, however, a match was found for the monster kangaroo in two renowned hunters, named Pilla and Indya, who, falling upon its track near Port Lincoln, on the range stretching to the north,

followed and overtook it on Mount Nilarro, situated about thirty miles from that place. Finding it asleep, they at once attacked it, but before they could quite kill it their spears became blunt; a disappointment that must have soured their tempers a good deal, as it caused a violent quarrel between them, in which Pilla stabbed his antagonist with one of the blunt spears in many places, while he himself received a severe blow over his nose with a midla: becoming reconciled, the friends again attacked and killed the Kupirri, and, on opening it, found to their utter astonishment the dead bodies of their comrades previously devoured by this monster kangaroo. But being no less skilled in the medical art than in hunting, they succeeded in reviving and healing these unfortunate men, and they all immediately betook themselves to roasting and devouring the Kupirri in return. The feast over, and their bodies comfortably greased with the fat of the animal, they proceeded in search of their mourning wives and families, to acquaint them with the happy termination of their disastrous adventures. The two heroes were afterwards metamorphosed into, and gave origin to two species of animals, the opossum and native cat, retaining as such not only their names, but also the scars of the wounds that they had inflicted on each other in the shape of a furrow down the former's nose, and of a number of white dots sprinkled over the skin of the latter.

III. —Between Coffin's and Sleaford Bays there is a line of bare, white sandhills, erroneously laid down in Flinders' map as white cliffs. These masses of drifting sand have most probably been piled up by the westerly gales, which often now alter their shape and position; but, according to a tradition of the natives, they were raised by Marnpi and Tatta, two of their ancestors. A great fire, coming from the ocean, spread far and wide on the sea-coast, and seemed likely to envelop the whole country in its flames. Deliberating how to prevent such a calamity, it occurred to the abovementioned personages, that the best method of quenching the fire would be to bury it; they accordingly betook themselves to the task, and, in executing it, threw up



Corrobaree.

those sandhills which testify to this day the vastness of the undertaking.

IV. —Renowned as a fierce warrior and immoderate lover is Welu, who, being foiled in his amours by the Nauo people, determined to exterminate the whole tribe. He succeeded in spearing all the men except Karatantya and Yangkunu, two young men, who flew for shelter into the top of a tree. Welu climbed after them with the intent to murder them also; but they had the cunning to break the branch on which he was standing, when, tumbling headlong to the ground, a tamed native dog seized and killed him. He has since been changed into the bird that now bears his name, and which in English is called the curlew, while the memory and names of the two young men who escaped his fury are perpetuated by two species of hawk.

V. —A small kind of lizard, the male of which is called Ibirri, and the female Waka, is said to have divided the sexes in the human species; an event that would appear not to be much approved of by the natives, since either sex has a mortal hatred against the opposite sex of these little animals, the men always destroying the waka and the women the ibirri.

The natives have many more similar tales among them; the above, however, which seemed to possess more of an interest than any of the rest, will be sufficient to show their monstrous and in every respect ridiculous character.

## AMUSEMENTS.

Singing and dancing are the favourite and almost only amusements of the Aborigines of these parts. They have a variety of songs, all consisting of only two or three verses each, as for instance the following: —

I.  
La Pirrá mirrána  
Tyinda kátutáya  
Kauwirrá, wirrána.

II.  
Tyurrá, tyurrá tyurráru  
Paltá paltáá paltarni  
Ninná kuitú ngangkáli.

In singing these and similar songs, each verse is repeated twice or even three times, and when they have finished the last verse

they begin afresh with the first one. If the proper metre or number of cadences be but observed, they care little or nothing for the meaning of the words of the song. Most songs now in vogue with them are derived from distant tribes, and I believe that they themselves understand very few if any of them; at all events they cannot explain their meaning, and seem to consider it quite unnecessary trouble to inquire into the matter. The tunes of their songs vary also considerably, some being slow and grave, others quick and lively; all of them, however, are rather monotonous, though not unpleasant, requiring only a gradual and regular rise and fall of the voice. They are very exact in keeping time, and to prevent any confusion in this respect they have recourse to their waddies, striking two of them together. The conclusion of a song is indicated by singing the last verse slowly in a subdued voice, suffering it gradually to sink until the last note becomes barely audible.

For dancing the mild summer evenings are generally chosen; if the moon be shining all the time so much the better, but if not, the deficiency is made up by blazing fires. Every one engaging in the dance ornaments his person by painting two white lines on each side from the shoulders down the breast to the wrist, a circle round each eye, a broad streak down the nose, two or three pairs of stripes across each upper arm, and tying a bunch of green boughs inclining downward round each leg a little above the knee. If they have any white down of birds they paste a row of it across the forehead and along the margin of the hair from one ear to the other, which gives them the appearance of women in nightcaps. In their hands the dancers hold a string about four feet long, seemingly for the purpose of balancing their bodies properly. They have various kinds of dances, but the one most approved and practised consists in jumping sideways, elevating the arm on the side to which they are jumping and declining it on the opposite side. The performers drawing up in a somewhat irregular line, and at such distances from each other as will allow sufficient space for the proper display of their antics, very gradually advance to the front of the singers, when they again

fall back to the rear. Each dance does not last above ten minutes, the motions of the body being so violent as to completely exhaust them in a short time.

The women, though commonly engaged in singing, do not all join in the dance—never more than two or three at a time; nor are their jumps and motions of the arms so violent and grotesque as those of the men. They also keep their cloaks modestly about their persons, while the men are invariably in a state of nudity. But even this slight participation on the part of the *fair sex* never fails to heighten the amusement and increase the exertions of the men. At the conclusion of the dancing, the men, after resting some time at about forty yards distance from the singers, advance, dancing one by one, when one of the women meets each halfway, and accompanies him dancing to the singers, where the man sits down. At the point where the two meet, the male dancer makes a short pause stamping with one foot several times on the ground, probably by way of compliment to the lady, after which they both jump away together. These evening amusements are often kept up to a late hour, frequently long after midnight, particularly if a great number are collected, or if two different tribes meet, when they will do their best to entertain each other with the number and variety of their songs and skill in performing.

Happiness and joyous pleasure are on such occasions depicted on every face, and one could scarcely believe that those good-humoured faces could ever be distorted with expressions of violent rage, or that gentle deportment changed into passionate frenzy; yet such is sometimes the case, especially during the hot season, when they evince a degree of irritability that during the dull winter months one would think their natures strangers to.

## FIGHTS.

Their fights may be properly divided into two classes, namely, those that arise suddenly and from trivial causes, and those that are premeditated, having some real or fancied grievance for their foundation. Although the behaviour of the natives towards each other is in general characterised by a good deal of courtesy and

goodnature, yet it will happen that friends disagree. The most common causes of quarrels are—women not conducting themselves as they should do, or are often unreasonably required to do; children quarrelling and hurting each other, thereby setting their parents at variance; or any of the men being overlooked in the distribution of food. The practice of dividing their provisions with friends is so universal, that it is considered a mark of very great illiberality in any person not to do so. An angry word or offensive action about any of these or similar matters operates like an electric shock, and everyone grasps his weapons, prepared to repel insult and aggression. Abusive language, though commonly made use of by women without any dangerous consequences, is rarely employed by men without ending in a fight; for though the friends of the aggrieved party generally try to appease him, and even to hold him back by main force, they but seldom succeed. First, waddies are flung, and when these are expended the opponents close, seeking to batter each others' heads with midlas. Dreadful gashes are often inflicted with this instrument, from which the blood flows in streams, and the sufferers are sometimes insensible. Spears are next resorted to, when the women and children run in all directions, the former screaming and abusing the fierce and passionate men. Whether it is to give more effect to their wrathful utterings, or merely to make themselves heard through the uproar, I cannot say, but they always give vent to their feelings in a sort of chant, dwelling upon the last syllable of each word, and dropping the voice towards the end of every sentence. Should any of the combatants be severely wounded, a wail on the part of the women and his relatives soon becomes the prevailing noise, and gradually puts a stop to the fight; after it is over perhaps every person that has been engaged in it is sorry that it has occurred, and the man who has inflicted a severe wound on his opponent will lament it as much and as sincerely as any of the rest. If any serious consequences should result from the fight, they generally cause another battle at a subsequent period, but if slight wounds and bruises be all, it is never more mentioned, and the parties that to-day attacked each other with a fury that nothing but

each opponent's life would seem to satisfy, will to-morrow be the best friends in the world.

The regular premeditated battles of the natives are always known, for weeks or months before to both parties; a convenient place is fixed upon by one party, and messengers are despatched to invite the enemy; these battles are generally caused by abduction, murder, or aggression with intent to take life, which usually originates in the before-mentioned superstitious belief of the aggressor, that the man whom he attacks has, by supernatural means, killed his relative that may lately have died. In such a case he selects several from among his friends, and rambles over the country fully determined to kill the suspected person wherever he meets him. Last summer two battles took place, one for murder committed, and the other for murder attempted. At the former both the murderer and the brother of the murdered were present, backed on either side by a great number of friends; it was agreed that the latter should aim two spears at the murderer, and that if neither took effect nor were returned the quarrel should be dropped. From the demonstrations and violent gestures of the warriors, such as jumping, running, biting of beards and spears, shouting, and grunting, I fully anticipated a general and bloody battle, but this was not the case. From each side the parties concerned ran forward, the one throwing a spear which was dexterously warded off by the other, and with that the fight ended. The other battle, for murder attempted, occurred in the town of Port Lincoln, to which the aggrieved party had been invited by messengers. On their arrival they marched up in a line two or three deep, each of them ornamented with white paint, and shavings resembling plumes in their hair, halting now and then and giving a simultaneous shout. As soon as their evolutions were over, the other party prepared to return the salute, painting themselves hastily, and drawing up in single file. They marched to where the enemy had encamped, keeping step and walking at a quick but short pace, in fact, a sort of trot; going round the camp they drew up in a solid body, and holding their heads downwards



uttered simultaneously one deep tremendous shout; after repeating this several times they marched back to their own camp in the same order as they had arrived. The evening and great part of the night was spent in singing and dancing by both hostile parties alternately. Early the next morning the fight commenced by eight men coming forward on either side with the customary inimical demonstrations of biting their beards and spears, but perfectly silent; forming themselves in opposite lines at a distance of about twenty paces, the combatants stood face to face and man to man, with legs spread out and firmly placed on the ground. Several spears had been thrown by each man, and warded off with great dexterity by merely bending the upper part of the body slightly to one side, and hitting the adversary's spear with the grubbing stick or reserved spears held in the left hand, when several of the party who had sent the challenge ran over to the other side in order to indicate, as I was told, that they wished the fight to end. One querulous old fellow, however, who had been the originator of the quarrel and who stood opposed to a young man of barely twenty years of age, seemed determined upon bloodshed; he threw several spears when the others had given over, and used the most provoking language, which was tartly returned by his young adversary. At length, however, the old man was interrupted by his own friends, who gave his spear a knock every time he hooked it to the wommara. The skill of the natives in avoiding and parrying spears is really astonishing; I saw this old man, who is reputed by his fellows a famous warrior, take such sure aims at his opponent that I thought he could not miss him, yet every time the spears were diverted from their direction by the sticks in the young man's hand, and passed over his shoulder within a few inches of his ear. A steady, bold eye alone could insure such a result, and this is also the warlike quality that the natives most applaud and principally pride themselves upon. It has been said, I believe, that the Aborigines of this country are great cowards; it may be that they evince a want of courage when opposed to white men who are provided with superior arms, generally mounted on horseback,

and very probably supposed by them to be possessed of superior skill and courage also; but any one who has had opportunities of seeing the natives' battles would not come to any such conclusion. They are very sensitive on this point, deeming it a most degrading insult to be called a coward. That their fights seldom terminate fatally must be attributed partly to their skill in warding off the spears, and partly to the fact that they have no thirst for bloodshed.

As the natives on the one hand are susceptible of an uncommon degree of hostile feeling, so also are they, on the other hand, possessed of sincere and deep sympathy, as is evinced in cases of severe illness, dangerous wounds, and especially after the death of any of their friends; they will, on such occasions, assemble and weep most bitterly, the females generally taking the lead. The loud lamentations simultaneously poured forth by them at such times may perhaps be looked upon as an hereditary custom, since they always cry together and make use of external means, such as rubbing the eyes or scratching the nose, to produce tears if the mournful disposition of the mind should not be sufficiently affected by the example of others. The cries or sobs are also, at the commencement of a wail, rather formal and apparently forced, leading one strongly to suspect that their desire for a mournful frame of mind is greater than their feelings warrant. Still, I am persuaded that the natives feel keenly and regret sincerely the loss of their friends, for these reasons: They lament their decease for weeks and even months after the event; very frequently in the evening, on arriving at their resting places, when they are tired and may be supposed to be in mood suitable for recollection and reflection, one person will suddenly break out in slow and sorrowful cadences, gradually inducing all the others to follow his example; after a wail, they preserve for a while a demure silence, and exhibit every other symptom of persons in affliction. Never, upon any account, is the name of the deceased mentioned again for many years after, not from any superstition, but for the professed reason that their mournful feelings may not be excited, or, to use their own expression, "that it may not make them cry

too much." If they have occasion to allude to dead persons, it is done by circumlocutions, such as these: I am a widower, fatherless, childless, or brotherless, as the case may be, instead of saying: my wife is dead, my father, child, or brother is dead. If a death occurs among them in the bush, it is with great difficulty that the name of the deceased can be ascertained. In such a case, the natives will remind you of incidents that may have happened in his lifetime, that he did such a thing, was present on such an occasion, &c., but no persuasion on earth will induce them to pronounce his name; and as a last reason for the sincerity of their sorrow, it may perhaps be mentioned that they will venture their own lives in avenging their departed friends if it is suspected that they have come by their deaths unfairly.

The mode of burial observed by the Port Lincoln natives is described by themselves as attended with many ceremonies, which are, however, sometimes dispensed with, as was the case with an old man, the only person that I have seen buried. A pit about five feet in depth, and only four feet in length, was dug; on the bottom some dry grass was spread, and on this the body was laid with legs bent upwards. The head was placed towards the west, a custom that I am informed is always observed, and is founded on their belief that the soul goes to an island in the east. The body is covered with a kangaroo skin, and strong sticks are placed lengthways over the mouth of the grave, one end being stuck in the earth a little below the surface, and the other resting on the opposite edge of the grave. On these the earth is put so as to leave a vacuum between them and the body and to form a mound of earth over the grave. A few branches or bushes thrown carelessly round the mound complete the simple ceremony.

The Aborigines inhabiting the Peninsula of Port Lincoln are divided into several tribes, with two of whom the European settlers are in daily contact, namely, the Nauo and Parnkalla tribes. Besides these, three other tribes are mentioned by the natives as known to them: —the Nukunnus in the north-east, the Kukatas in the north-west, and the Ngannityiddis in the north,

between the two last-mentioned of whom a few have now and then visited the settlement. All these tribes seem in general to be on tolerably good terms with each other, at least it does not appear that there are any hereditary feuds between them, such as exist in other parts of the colony. It is true that the Kukatas are universally feared and abominated, but apparently more on account of their reputed skill in witchcraft and various other dangerous tricks than for their warlike qualities. Natives belonging to different tribes, and not previously acquainted, are very shy for the first day or two after their meeting, avoiding and not addressing each other unless induced to do so by a third party, the convenient custom of formal introductions being as yet unknown to them. Any attempt at computing the number of the natives must be futile, as I have never heard of a whole tribe being collected together at one time; I should think, however, that in assuming each tribe as containing 200 souls the real number would by no means be exceeded. The principal mark of distinction between the tribes is difference of language or dialect; where the tribes intermix greatly no inconvenience is experienced on this account, as every person understands, in addition to his own dialect, that of the neighbouring tribe; the consequence is that two persons commonly converse in two languages, just as an Englishman and German would hold a conversation, each person speaking his own language, but understanding that of the other, as well as his own. This peculiarity will often occur in one family through intermarriages, neither party ever thinking of changing his or her dialect for that of the other. Children do not always adopt the language of the mother, but that of the tribe among whom they live. The Parnkalla dialect, with which I have made myself principally acquainted, is spoken by the tribe of the same name, inhabiting the eastern coast of this peninsula from Port Lincoln northward probably as far as the head of Spencer's Gulf. The Nauo is spoken in the southern and western parts of this district, and seems to deviate from the Parnkalla by a broader and harsher pronunciation and different inflexions or terminations of the words, verbs as well as nouns; many words,

however, are totally different. The following examples will explain this more fully: —

<i>Parnkalla.</i>	<i>Nauo.</i>	<i>English.</i>
Ninna	Niino	Thou
Idna	Tyina	Foot
Yurno	Tyendu	Sun
Kubmanna	Kuma	One
Kalbelli	Kutta	Two
Karnko	Wamo	House
Karnkuru	Wamuyu	To the house
Ngukata	Ngukanna	To go
Ngukayu	Ngukalye	In order to go
Ngukaka	Nguka	Go

Both dialects terminate every word with a vowel, which makes it difficult for them to pronounce English correctly. Hence arise corruptions like these—knipy for knife, boatoo for boat, bullocky for bullock, Williamy for William, &c. The Parnkalla is a peculiarly soft and even melodious language when carefully and slowly pronounced, which the natives, however, seldom do, but on the contrary they often contract two words into one, or abbreviate long words, thereby completely spoiling the naturally pleasant effect. The women and small children pronounce by far the best. It is not well possible to describe the language within the limits of this report, so as to give to a person wholly unacquainted with it even an approximate idea of its structure, I shall therefore content myself with comprising the most striking peculiarities under the following heads: —

1. The letters F, V, H, and all sibilants, do not occur in it.
2. It has no articles, either definite or indefinite.
3. It recognises no distinction of gender beyond that necessarily contained in such words as father, mother, brother, sister, &c.; the pronoun pana answers for the three English pronouns, he, she, and it.
4. It has no relative pronouns, the want of which is obviated by circumlocutions, or the use of demonstrative pronouns instead.
5. Besides the singular and plural it has a dual number, to be used when only two persons or objects are the subject of conversation.

6. Of the personal pronouns there are three distinct forms, expressing different degrees of relationship between the person or persons spoken to or of, as, for instance, *ngadli*, we two (viz. brothers); *ngarrinye*, we two (parent and child); *ngadlaga*, we two (husband and wife), &c.

7. There are no prepositions in this language, the deficiency being made up by a great variety of inflexions, or rather terminations of the nouns, inseparable from them, as, *karnko*, house; *karnkungu*, in the house; *karnkuru*, to the house; *karnkotarri*, beyond the house; *karnkongunne*, from the house; and many other similar terminations.

8. The verb, though without a distinct passive voice, presents the peculiarity of a number of conjugations, indicating secondary relations of the actions expressed by the root of the verb—in other words, the conjugation from verbs neutral and active, reciprocal and continuative. This novel feature of the language renders the acquisition of it difficult, as it is only by experience that one learns to distinguish those conjugations really in use from those that might be formed but are not used.

9. Another peculiarity, and poverty at the same time, is the absence of all numerals beyond three.

The construction of sentences, and particularly the use of the moods of verbs, appears also very peculiar, but I am not sufficiently acquainted with this part of the language to venture a description.