

IX 5 1

NATIVE HUTS, etc.

Early MSS.

HUTS, MIAS, CAMPS

(To be corrected)

The aborigines of the West are a nomadic race. It is necessary for them to move very frequently from place to place in pursuit of food, always keeping within the boundaries of their tribal territories. The various seasons of the year have their different products. The sea coast and creeks are visited at certain times for the fish etc. that are to be obtained there. The feeding grounds of the kangaroo are known and visited at stated periods and the many roots that form their subsistence have to be sought at their proper seasons. Travelling always in search of food, their lives are by no means monotonous, their domestic utensils are not sufficiently cumbersome either to impede them in their journey or to form a need for a more permanent residence in which to store them. Hence their "mias" are in all cases of a temporary nature, a piece of bark, a few boughs to form a breakwind, a natural cave in the limestone and sandstone, a hollow tree, a hole made in the sandy soil, these form the usual "encampments", particularly within the tropics. Further south the huts are of a more substantial nature, but as a rule the native is content with the most primitive shelter obtainable in his journeys to and fro within his boundaries in search of food.

The temporary nature of these shelters has not varied in the course of centuries. Research amongst the records of the earliest voyagers who visited the W.A. coast and came into contact with the natives and their method of living, reveals the same method of erecting shelters and sleeping places which exists at the present day, and the descriptions given by those old writers of the portions of the Nor'West and West coast which they explored in the 17th century might be applied to many of the yet unsettled portions of the Nor'West in the XXth.

Tasman, who visited the Nor'West coast in 1644, evidently entertained an animus against the whole of the West Australians, for he winds up a very bad record of their character with the statement that "their coast is dangerous, there is but little vegetation, and the people use no houses." The records of Tasman's voyage along

this coast have never been discovered, and with the exception of "Migration of Mankind" Witzgen a few passages in Witzgen's notes which have been quoted by Flinders nothing has come down to us from Tasman himself. 1688 Dampier was sadly disappointed in his search for native habitations. Three days were spent in searching for their houses, "being in hopes to allure them with toys to a commerce," wrote Dampier, "but the only buildings he discovered were "a few boughs stuck up to keep the wind from them." In his disappointment at not being able to refit his ship, Dampier also gives the places visited a very bad character, which is sustained in the narrative of his second voyage to the Nor'West coast in 1699.

Vlanning arrived on the west coast some nine years after Dampier's first visit (1696) and landed on the shore opposite Flinders Introduction LIX Rottnest. He there found "three deserted huts so low and ill constructed as to be inferior to those of the Hottentots." No nearer description of these huts nor of some others that were observed has been given, although the coast was examined carefully by Vlanning from Rottnest Island to the Nor'West Cape, but they were probably not much different to the "bough break-winds" of Dampier.

Several voyages were made after Dampier's, but it is not until we come to Vancouver that mention is made of native huts. In King 1798 Vancouver vol. I P. 33 George's Sound which Vancouver discovered, he states that he saw "the most miserable habitation my eyes ever beheld... The shape of the dwelling was that of a beehive, or a hive vertically divided into two equal parts, one of which formed the hut, in height about three feet and in diameter about four feet and a half; it was however constructed with some degree of uniformity with slight twigs...the horizontal and vertical twigs formed intervals from four to six inches square, and the latter sticking a few inches into the earth, were its security, and fixed it to the ground. This kind of basket hut was covered with the bark of trees and small green boughs; just within its front which was open the whole of its diameter, a fire had been made."

Vancouver reflects sorrowfully on this miserable contrivance, rendered yet more miserable according to him by the "apparent solitude

and melancholy aspect of the surrounding country which presented little less than famine and distress."

Illustration
facing P. 54
vol. I
Vancouver

P. 36, I.

Family
residences

On the shores of Princess Royal Harbour Vancouver discovered a deserted village of the natives, the huts being of the same construction as the one mentioned above. He observed that even in the humble state of the aborigines "they were not destitute of distinctions for two or three huts were larger and differed in shape from the rest, as if a couple were fixed close to the side of each other, but the parts which in that case would have caused a separation were removed and the edges joined close together (as described in the plate) leaving the whole of their fronts open, and increasing their diameter about one third more than the rest."

Except these huts, the "weares" for taking fish and some steps made in the bark for the purpose of ascending some of the large trees, which were all undoubtedly the effects of manual labour, Vancouver saw no other signs of the country being inhabited, and left the port without encountering any human beings except those of his own party. Another village was discovered by Mr. Broughton about two miles further inland of nearly the same magnitude, but of much more recent date than that seen by Vancouver. It was situated in a swamp, and one or two larger huts were here also observed. "The larger trees in the neighbourhood had been hollowed out by fire and upon stones placed inside of these, fires had been made which proved that they had been used as habitations, either for the inferior of the party, which would argue a further degree of subordination amongst them, or for those who were too indolent to build....No one species of furniture or utensil was discovered in any of the houses."

Flinders'
Voyages
vol. I

Flinders anchored in K.G.S. in December 1801 and held many communications with the natives, but makes no mention of any kind of shelters or huts used by the

Illustration
of K.G.S.
P. 60- I.

aborigines. Probably those villages which Vancouver discovered, were then inhabited by the tribe which frequented the Sound during Flinders' visit, but if so, the party were never allowed to approach the camp, as invariably in their wanderings

they were accompanied by the natives who "headed them off" the direction in which their women were located.

The extreme north of the State was next visited by King who
 1819
 King's
 Voyages, I
 landed at Long Island and describes the huts seen there as being similar to those at South West Bay. "They were of a conical shape not more than three feet high....built of sticks stuck in the ground and being united at the top supported a roof of bark which was again covered with sand so that the hut looked more like a sand hillock than the abode of a human creature; the opening was at one side and about eighteen inches in diameter."

The only attempt at a stone building was seen by King in the vicinity of Careening Bay, where his party came upon a small village, containing several huts, no two of which were built alike. One of them is thus described: "Two walls of stones piled one upon the other to the height of three feet, formed the two ends, and saplings were laid across to support a covering of bark or dried grass; the front, which faced the east, was not closed; but the back, which slanted from the roof to the ground, appeared to have been covered with bark like the roof."

Illus-
 tration
 431, I.

The natives in the neighborhood of Port Leschenault evidently had but temporary constructions of boughs and grass for their dwelling places. In Stirling's Journal, which contains records of various expeditions, there is no more detailed mention of native huts met with, except one seen by Mr. Bussell near Pt. Augusta, which was particularly large and well made, in the bottom of which was spread an oblong mat, of tea-tree bark.... nearly six feet long, "the only instance of house furniture" recorded.

Stirling
 P. 85
 P. 183

Irwin describes the huts of the natives in the vicinity of Swan, Port Augusta and K.G.S. as "resembling beehives....about four feet high and capable of containing three or four persons. They are constructed in a few minutes with sticks and covered with the bark of the tea-tree. The entrance is on the side which is sheltered from the prevalent wind, where, instead of a door, fire is kindled, towards which the inmates stretch their feet when they lie down."

Irwin's
 W.A.
 P. 23

Wilson mentions the huts seen in the vicinity of K.G.S. and noted that the description of these habitations given by Vancouver coincided with their appearance at the time of his visit, the larger huts mentioned by Vancouver were those of the married people, which are always placed at some distance from each other and from the other habitations.

In the neighborhood of Hanover Bay, Grey found that the natives used only bark beds, placed under the shelter of the trees, and at Prince Regent River he came upon a large encampment in which however there were no huts. "An extensive circle was formed by laying large flat stones upon the ground and on each side of these a smaller one...Near some of the stones were laid huge snells...and in the centre of the circle were the marks of frequent fires." This place of their sojourn was typical of many others Grey met with in his travels. Near the Glenelg River he

176, I) came upon a place where twelve bark beds had been left in a circle round a fire, the place showing the appearance of having been used for some time by the natives as a camping place. In this respect the natives of the Nor'West differ from those of the Southern parts of W.A. who generally sleep all of a heap or at least four or five persons together. In the north each native sleeps by himself, either on a little bark bed as described by Grey, or else in a hollowed out portion of the ground which in the cold season is heated by lighting a fire in the hollow and covering it with sand; before retiring the embers are taken away leaving the warm sand at the bottom. (Have seen this method at Beagle Bay.)

In the sandstone ranges between the Glenelg and Prince Regent Rivers, Grey found a hut with a sloping roof, the first of its kind he had ever seen.

vol I, 362) The huts built by the natives on the Gascoyne were much higher and altogether of a superior description to those made by the natives in the Southwest, being built of large sized logs. The native Kaiber, who accompanied Grey, became frightened at the size of these huts and proposed that the party should go no further as the "natives must be very large men from their having such large huts."

During Grey's journey overland from Gantheaume Bay to Perth, P. 19, vol. II) after the wreck of his boats at the former place, near the estuary of the Hutt River he passed two native villages, the huts differing from those in the southern districts in being much larger, more strongly built and very nicely plastered over the outside with clay and clods of turf. They were evidently intended for fixed places of residence. Besides these, there were well marked roads, deeply sunk wells, and extensive warran grounds P. 20, vol. II) which all spoke of a large and comparatively speaking, resident population in this district, the great facilities for obtaining abundance of food in so rich a soil being undoubtedly the cause of the existence of this large village which was indicative of some advance in civilisation amongst the aborigines.

At Bowes River the party came upon another favorite halting vol. II, 26) place of the natives, Grey concluding from the numbers of huts and other indications which he saw, that the district was very densely populated. The huts were similarly constructed to those previously mentioned. (These were the largest villages ever seen in W.A. by any of the explorers.)
37, vol. II) There was another large assemblage of huts on the Greenough River, which taken collectively would have contained at least a hundred and fifty natives. These too, were of the same permanent character as those on the Bowes and Hutt Rivers.

Dr. Scott Nind, who was in K.G.S. in 1826-9, describes what he calls the "wigwams" of the natives of that district. They are Journal "composed of a few small twigs stuck in the ground and Geog. Sec. bent over in the form of a bower about four feet high P. 27 and five or six wide. Sometimes two are united. They also thatch them slightly with the leaves of the grass tree. In rainy weather they are roofed with pieces of bark, upon which stones are placed, to secure them from being blown away; they are generally erected in a sheltered spot near water, with the back towards the prevailing wind, and a fire is kept burning constantly in the front. One of the huts contains several individuals who lie covered in their mantles, huddled together in a crowded state. An encampment rarely consists of more than seven or eight huts, for except during the fishing and

burning seasons, at which times large parties assemble together, their numbers are generally small, and two or three huts suffice. The number of individuals however seldom exceed fifty. The huts are so arranged as not to overlook each other. The single men have one to themselves, the children sleep with the women in a large hut near their husbands. These encampments generally consist of near relations, and deserve the name of families rather than tribes."

When large tribal gatherings take place ^{on} the occasion of a great feast, the various visiting tribes are assigned certain situations in the camp according to the direction from which they come, so that when the time for departure arrives they can leave without disturbing their neighbours. Moreover, the arrangement of the camps is such that none are overlooked by the others, a certain amount of privacy being thus obtained. It is interesting to come upon some of these deserted encampments and note the ingenuity displayed in grouping them so that no one "front entrance" faces another. In thus arranging their camps it is shewn that the aborigines do not herd together promiscuously, but maintain a certain order and method. For instance great care is taken to separate the young unmarried men from the unmarried females and families, and it is not permitted to the young men to mix with the females. Between the camps of each tribe at the general meetings there is usually a space of about thirty yards; for though they are all supposed to be on friendly terms at such meetings, some apprehension doubtless exists, that the meeting may not terminate as favourably as it began.

Mrs. Millett describes the native huts in the York district. (An Australian Parsonage, P. 76) "They are made of boughs, the roofs round shaped, too low to stand upright in, with the entrance carefully turned away from the wind. If the wind shifts in the night some one has to get up to alter the position of the doorway. In front of each hut a fire is lighted."

Giles in his travels through the State, often saw places at native camps where the ground had been raised for many yards, like a series of babies' graves, and mentioned that "these were the sleeping places of the young and unmarried

Giles
Aus.
II, 13

men, they scoop the soil out of a place and raise it upon each side; these are the bachelors' beds - twenty, thirty and forty are sometimes seen in a row; on top of each raised portion of soil two small fires are kept burning in lieu of blankets. Helms mentions this mode of camping at the Everard Range.

Caves are sometimes used as sleeping and camping places (?) but as even the bough breakwind affords some privacy these cave dwellings are not very frequently occupied.

At Beagle Bay and Disaster Bay, in the cold winter months, the natives when camped scoop out a circular depression in the sand about 18 inches deep, the diameter varying according to the number of persons using it. In this depression they light a fire and gradually replace the sand they have scooped out, until it is all sufficiently heated. At bed time each person scrapes a trench in the warm sand and lies down without any clothing, letting the loose sand fall in around his body, but leaving his face uncovered. A man with his family will occupy one of these holes, several young men another, old women and the young unmarried females a third and so on. Sometimes pebbles are mixed with the sand to retain the heat and blisters are often raised on the skin through lying on too hot pebbles.

The Northern tribes and those of the interior are certainly more nomadic in their habits than those inhabiting the Southern districts, which is entirely due to the more scanty food supply of those parts. Their sleeping places are usually the bare ground, sometimes warmed in the manner resorted to by the Beagle Bay natives, more often there is simply a small fire on either side of the natives, between which they lie, thus making one fire serve two of them. They always lie down quite naked, no matter what clothing they may wear during the day.

During the heavy tropical rains the northern natives build shelters which are very easily erected and hence it is that the W.A. Helms' native never returns to a deserted hut, as a fresh Anthropology 244-5 one can be constructed with little trouble and is infinitely more comfortable than an old one would be. Two forked saplings are placed together, forming a triangle with the ground,

and leaning a little away from the weather side, are supported by a third sapling. The apex of this triangle is about five feet from the ground and on it are resting two somewhat longer saplings, slanting against the wind. Over these are placed bushes in such a fashion as to form a semicircular roof-like shelter, which at times is covered with grass or tussocks of spinifex, to keep out still better the wind and weather.

In the Kimberley district the natives protect themselves against the mosquitoes, by constructing an oven-shaped sleeping (Helms, place of clay. To form the dome they pile a heap of 292) bushes together which they cover with mud just thick enough to stand by itself and when dry, they pull the bushes out of the hole left for the purpose of entering the structure. This opening is just large enough to allow a man to squeeze in and is closed by a tussock of spinifex pulled into it from outside so that it jams in tight. A whole family often occupies this airtight dormitory during the night when the heat must become terribly stifling, only to be endured by natives.

The extensive limestone and sandstone formations in the interior of the State and in the north and north-west, afford the natives of those districts an easy home and save them the trouble of building, and here also they have in many cases displayed their love of art, for the flat parts of the caves are covered with drawings and carvings of animals, fights, etc.

Stokes mentions some very primitive shelters used by the natives of King's Sound. "One was a slight rudely thatched covering placed on four upright poles, between three and four feet high". Others of a much superior description which were found on the western shore of King's Sound are thus described. "Stout poles from 14 to 16 feet high formed the frame work of these huts, these were brought together conically at the roof, a stout thatching of dried grass completely excluded both wind and rain. The remains of small fires, a well greased bark pillow and a head ornament of sea birds' feathers, proved that the huts had been recently inhabited.

Stokes' Discoveries, 101, vol. I (Illustration)

Illustrated 172, vol. I

All boys and young men who have not been initiated are required to Eyre, sleep at some distance from the huts of the adults and to 304, II. move away when daylight dawns so that they shall neither see nor be seen by the women. These boys and men sleep in the manner referred to by Giles - on the bare ground and with a fire lighted on either side.

In this description of the many varieties of shelter used by the natives, it will be seen that, except in a few instances, their dwellings are all of a temporary nature, the exigencies of the food supply, the absence of any attempt at cultivation, the scant resources of the interior, the necessity of roaming over a vast extent of country in search of food, the absence of timber, these and many other causes preclude any idea of permanent habitations, and so from time immemorial the dwellings of the Australian aborigines have been of the rudest description, hastily erected and as hastily quitted. Travellers in the interior have often come upon a collection of these shelters, perhaps in a spot that has not been visited by the rain for years, and have perhaps wondered if a death has occurred in the camp which would be one of the causes of its abandonment. The chief cause however is the exhaustion of the food supply which compels the natives to journey to another portion of their extensive domains and form another encampment.

In the Northern portions of this State, where the extremes of cold are not experienced, the natives live for the most part with very slight shelter. The river natives usually form their camps in the river beds, occasionally a rise in the river takes place suddenly perhaps at night and sweeps away everything before it. Some years ago a sudden rise in the Shaw River occurred, annihilating a whole tribe who had for months been encamped in its bed. On the De Grey River a similar occurrence decimated a number of that tribe, who had foolishly settled themselves in its bed, during an unusually dry season. Yet notwithstanding this, the river beds were occupied again as soon as the waters left the river.

During the rainy season Mr. Durlacher states that the natives of the Nor'West made a "mia" or "marloo" of earth and leaves built over a frame, but these abodes are deserted as soon as the rain ceases. Their sleeping apartment in fine or cold weather is a breakwind made of bushes, with places hollowed out in the earth to fit their bodies, when in a recumbent position. These shelters from the wind are sometimes of considerable length and in shape semi-circular and at night for the sake of securing warmth in equal proportions to each sleeper fires are placed between them one close to their bodies the other at their feet. These fires require pretty constant attention on cold nights, the Australian generally throwing off all his clothes at night and depending solely on the fires to give sufficient warmth for his body.

NATIVE HUTS, etc. Encampment and Daily LifeTo be corrected or deleted

A short description of the daily domestic life of the natives is furnished by J.S. Durlacher. "Imagine yourself lying peacefully by your camp fire on the grassy banks of some tree or river.... Away to your right on a low sandy rise are to be seen numerous small fires, these indicating the natives' camps, and these fires show the position of their different marloos or sleeping places, each family or division of the tribe having a place or camp to themselves, and if close enough you will observe a dusky form rise at intervals to a sitting posture, rake up the embers of the little fire,., and start it into a blaze; then he will perhaps croon in a low tone one of his strange weird tribal songs keeping up the refrain until his body has been sufficiently warmed, then he will drop back again into his resting place, and is soon asleep..... Lying watching the coming dawn..... a mournful wail sounds in your ears....the mourning wail of the native women apostrophising the spirits of the departed souls; this wail generally is started just as day begins to lighten in the east and is continued until it broadens into daylight, but let us draw near and listen and most likely we will observe two or three ancient beldames cowering over a small fire, very hideous in their mourning adornment of white ochre (gilpah) and black charcoal, the white covering their skull completely and part of the face, with white and black streaks on the body and legs, but listen to their cry : "Yandawarra brandi oh-o-o." "Narla banner oh-o-o," drawn out exactly like the howl of a ballee (dingo). ("Wanger, moochee, doothar, dingo are some of the local Nor' West names for the native wild dog of W.A.). It is a strange cry from a strange people..... Sounds.....of animal and bird life betaken the coming day, when even the savage has to bestir himself to hunt for his daily food.... Camp fires are being raked up into a blaze, the remnants of yesterday's hunting spoils are being raked out from under wood, sheets of bark, or else from the deep recesses of a "yandee", a hollow wooden vessel used by the natives for carrying or storing their chattels and food in and here you will see a wee "koopachoo", black as ebony, chewing a roasted banjooner's tail with great gusto, or perhaps a

copper coloured imp with a mouth full of kooroo paste, or an ancient old lady gravely pounding "bookarjee" between two smooth stones and stuffing the food into her mouth in great quantities....but here is a more interesting subject, a young man and his bibbeejura (young wife): see how the wife fossicks out the best roast korree (bandicoot) from the yandee and gracefully flings it to her black lord, who, knocking it lightly on his meero (throwing board) to get rid of any superfluous grit or ashes that may have clung to it, he then starts to carve it into joints with the sharp kundee (flint stone) that is attached to the end of his meero, and this being done to his satisfaction, the smallest and generally the inferior parts will be his wife's share of the morning meal, but she will make up for this during the day when hunting in company with other women for roots, seeds, birds' eggs, wild fruit...iguanas, snakes, young birds, etc. and her warrior away with his friends talking a pickoodar (red kangaroo) on the hills, or searching for koonkawarra (wild honey) along the river flats, or burning the spinifex plains to drive out the wiarwarra (rat) from his shelter under the grass tussocks, or having a flying shot with his boomerang at a gnyamee (whistling rat). The old women and decrepit old men are generally left to mind the camp while the others are away hunting for their daily food, and you will often discover the old people on the banks of a pool close to their habitations busily engaged roasting the roots of the bulrush reeds, bookarjees, and water flags (yanjadee), the roasting operation is a very simple one, the reeds or flags being simply pulled up by the roots which are just scorched over a hot fire and then pounded between two stones....a prehistoric pestle and mortar, and when the roots are properly pounded into a flat mass they are ready for eating, and taste as near as possible like coarse moist uncooked oatmeal with a lot of stringy fibres mixed up with it....It is often the mainstay of the inland tribes during the frequent and severe droughts that occur in those parts of the Northwest, but now let us follow the young men on their hunting expedition after the pickoodar into the rough hills where it dwells. Watch the lithe active young hunters striding over the rugged hill sides as easily and quietly as we would move on a grass lawn, and note the peculiar postures and pantomimic actions

of the leader, his keen practised eye having detected fresh signs of the proximity of the game they are hunting for, watch him as he stands on the top of a big boulder, one hand raised above his head, with three fingers spread, the other hand pointing in the direction of the game, then another sign showing the others how many he can observe, then, after a brief consultation by hand and arm signals you will observe the leader drop down in a squatting position like a tailor when sewing his cloth, cross his feet, turn up one horny heel into a position that it would be almost impossible for a white man to take, unless he were very supple in his hip joints... and after doing this he will be seen to place the point of his long hunting spear on the sole of his foot and sharpen it by means of a flint chisel attached to the end of his meero.

Meanwhile his friends have not been idle but have succeeded in getting to windward of the kangaroo, without exciting their alarm, and now comes the most critical part of the chase, as the hunters will make two or three small smokes by burning green spinifex away to windward of the now startled kangaroos, who are sitting bolt upright in the graceful position that these creatures assume when alarmed, note the doe, how her dark liquid eyes shine, and her nostrils expand, as she lifts her head to the wind to discover where the danger lies, and now her long ears stand erect as she sights the distant smokes, which have been made by the natives to attract their attention and purposely to alarm the game, now a sharp shrill whistle is heard (the note of alarm uttered is certainly more like a whistle than any other sound) which is the alarm note of the "pickoodar" and away the whole troop fly being now fully alarmed by the danger which lies behind, but almost at the same time that they take to flight, their own danger signal sounds in front of them which brings them to a standstill, being fairly baffled which way now to fly, as they can scent the danger behind, and hear their own natural warning notes in front, which notes have been uttered by the native before described, who, hidden amongst some rocks overlooking the pad or path along which he knows the animals will approach when taking flight, but presently the kangaroo becoming greatly alarmed by the approach of the natives coming behind them, make off at top speed along the path towards where the hidden native is crouched. Again the danger

signal is uttered, and again the creatures are brought to a standstill, but this time only for a few seconds, as the huntsmen are still closing up behind them, so away they speed again until close to the hidden native, whose black form suddenly shoots up from his hiding place, a long arm shoots out and a long spear hurtles through the air striking the body of the leading kangaroo with a dull thud which sound betokens that the spear has driven home. A grunt of satisfaction escapes from the lips of the successful hunter, who knows that his game is mortally wounded although most likely the creature has bounded away up the hillside, but our sable hunters are on its track and like bloodhounds they will follow it to the death, the chase may be up hill and down dale for a mile or even two before the poor creature falls exhausted from loss of blood, but when overtaken by the native there is a yell of triumph such as only wild men can utter and a thick black smoke, rising from some lighted spinifex with green boughs placed on top, goes up heavenward, a signal to announce to far off friends at the river camp, that the day's hunting has been successful and now having secured the game the next question is preparing and cooking the animal, and if one of our hunters have not taken the trouble to bring a fire stick with them from their camp their first object will be to find suitable material for generating fire, so a search is made for the dry stems of a species of nightshade that grows very plentifully in that part of the country and having procured suitable material, you will observe one of the natives draw out from his hair a smooth pointed hardwood stick about a foot long, then a small hole is punched with a sharp pointed flint into the smoothest side of the dry stem and a shallow groove is made from the hole down one side of the stem, and then the worker is ready to start fire making, so he squats on the ground, places one foot on each end of the stem to keep it steady, inserts the hardwood stick into the hole, holding it upright between his open palms and then commences to make it twirl rapidly by hand movement until the friction of the two woods generates sufficient heat to cause a little smoke, then a small mat of fine grass is placed under the stick, and a hair out of the native's beard or head is placed in the hole where the friction occurs, and sometimes

a little oil or grease from the native's face is rubbed off with his thumb, and smeared on the end of the revolving stick, and now the blackfellow who doubtless is hungry after his long fast starts again to vigorously twirl the stick soon causing smoke to be visible, and now a little stream of brown wood dust caused by the friction commences to fall gently down the groove on to the grass mat below, at first the colour is light brown but gradually shading into dark brown as the heat increases, then when the fire commences to generate it turns almost black, a little smoke is then seen to rise from the small heap of wood dust, this shows that it has caught fire and is smouldering, the worker then carefully lifts his sticks, puts them aside, wraps the grass mat carefully around the latent spark, lifts it up as carefully and swings it gently in the wind which soon causes the grass to ignite, the rest is easy and a large fire is soon ablaze, the place chosen generally being the sandy bed of a creek and while the fire is heating the sand, the hunters are busy extracting a portion of the entrails from the body of the kangaroo only the parts that they eat being left in the carcase, the operation being performed with sharp flints or the stone axe attached to the end of a meero, the skin is not taken off, the body of the kangaroo being placed in the hole in the hot sand, over which the fire has been burning, but before this is done, the native who does the cooking (generally the one who spears the game) first looks round him for some smooth stones from the bed of the creek which are made very hot in the fire and then quickly pushed into the body of the kangaroo at the opening from whence the entrails were extracted, a hole is scooped out and the carcase placed in it, then covered over with the loose sand and ashes and then left to cook in its own juices, the hot stones giving the necessary heat inside and the hot sand and ashes on the outside....these simple savages understand how to preserve all the nutriment in the meats they prepare.... The carcase being done... is now dragged forth and some of the choice parts eaten, the rest being carried home, and that night there is much rejoicing, singing and feasting at the camp by the river. So let us view the festivities at night by the light of the numerous camp fires.

It is a strange scene, the dark forms of the natives showing up in strong relief against the firelight, the shouts of unrestrained mirth from young women and children, mournful cries from the old people who seem to aid digestion by crying on all joyful occasions, the wild songs of the men, with women and children joining in, and keeping such perfect time that would put to shame many a choral society in our cities, and make them wonder at what time in the world's history these savages had learnt the art of singing in perfect unison, without one false note from even the smallest child, but our thoughts are arrested as the wild refrain "Hee-winibee-ar ree-ban-ar" sounds shrill and clear on the night air; the band which consists of two or three men beat time by clapping two boomerangs together in a fashion which a civilised person would find hard to imitate, two or three more scrape time with sticks on their meeros, the movements suggesting a fiddle and bow, and the instruments, though undoubtedly primitive, produce sounds which seem to blend naturally with their singing, their songs seem to be chiefly descriptive of hunting and war.... Now let us return to the camp fires, the singing is growing fast and lively, one old chapiter (bearded man, frequently pronounced jaboodar) is leading the chorus with great gusto raising his kyliies high above his head and bringing them down almost to the ground again with a quick quivering rattling sound, another young man scraping time in quite a lively fashion on his meero, children laughing and crying but picking up time and joining in the chorus in a most startling fashion, but the performers are now growing weary, the last song is ended up with the common but expressive native ejaculation "sh" or "wah" and the festive group are now departing to their different family camp divisions, fire stick in hand (this is called bookarra or karlar), as few natives would move at night without the "karla tamar" or lighted bark torch, being afraid of the evil spirits, and soon there is quiet in the camp with the exception of some old women who are apparently suffering from the cold or insomnia and keep on crooning a mournful dirge. And so ends one day of the life of the natives.