Taplin

Grammar of the Narrinyeri Tribe
of Australian Aborigines

GRAMMAR

NARRINYERI TRIBE

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES.

By the late REV. G. TAPLIN,
Aborigines' Missionary, Point McLeay.

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THE GRAMMAR

Language of the "Narrinyeri" Tribe.

THIS language is spoken by the tribe of aborigines in South Australia inhabiting the country on the shores of Encounter Bay and the Lakes Alexandrina, Albert, and Coorong, and twenty miles up the River Murray. There are some trifling variations of dialect between the clans that compose the tribe, but I do not perceive such a difference as would be an impediment to a stranger learning the language.

My object in committing to writing the information which I have gathered respecting the grammar of this tongue has been to present it in such a form as to enable students of Comparative Philology to use it for the purpose of rendering a modicum of help towards arriving at correct conclusions respecting the Philosophy of Language. The comparison of the grammatical structure of different languages is of the greatest importance, and the surest guide to the real relationships of language and nations. In saying this, I am almost quoting the remarks of that lamented and eminent laborer in this department of Anthropological science, the late Dr. Bleek, of Cape Town.

Any one who has ever undertaken to gather up the grammar of an unwritten and barbarous language, will appreciate the difficulties which have to be encountered. Inquiries are useless when addressed to minds upon whom the idea of grammar never dawned. Expressions are heard having a certain force, and it is only after years of careful observation that those expressions can be analyzed, and their true character discerned; and this difficulty is increased when, as in the language of the Narrinyeri, ellipsis and abbreviations abound. The Rev. H. A. E. Meyer, a Lutheran Missionary, made a brave attempt to master the grammar of this language in 1843, and with some success; but yet his attempt presents a great number of ludicrous mistakes to one better acquainted with it. I found I had to rely on my own observations if I was to gain any correct knowledge of the language.

It is necessary in pursuing such an inquiry to avoid falling into the mistake of supposing and concluding that there are complications and difficulties of structure where there are none, and refinements and nice distinctions of signification existing when there is nothing of the kind. Sentences and expressions, which appear at first to have this character, afterwards resolve themselves into simple and understood phrases. It has several times been my experience to have what appeared strange and unintelligible conglomerations of words resolve themselves into plain and forcible expressions.

I do not presume that in preparing this grammer I have never fallen into any mistakes. I know that I am always discovering something in the language which I did not know before. And, indeed, it is the case with every observant speaker of his native tongue that he is continually finding out new capabilities and powers and beauties of expression ; it is then much more certain that such will be the case in learning a strange and hitherto unwritten language.

The aborigines speak their language very correctly, that is, they dislike to hear what they consider irregular expressions. Although they do not understand systematic grammar, they know when one phrase is wrong and another right. The principal cause of changes in the language is the custom of dropping the use of words which may be contained in the name of some person who dies. This often produces awkward changes, but more of words than of grammar.

In giving names to animals I observe that the name often resembles the voice or note of the animal ; but I do not see any traces of imitation of the sounds made by beasts or birds beyond this.

The language of the Narrinyeri is lexically very different from the languages of the neighboring tribes.

It is remarkable that the Narrinyeri (like all other nations) in speaking English speak it according to the idiom of their own language ; the English words are arranged according to the aboriginal vernacular.

LETTERS.

In writing native, I have used the "vowels" according to the following table of their sounds :—

a — as *a* in *father*.   o — as *o* in *hope*.
e — as *a* in *hate*.   u — as *oo* in *moon*.
i — as *e* in *mete* [to measure.]   ai — as *i* in *mine*.

"ĭ" at the end of words with ʋ over it [ĭ] — as*i* and *y* in *pity* and *city*.

The "consonants" are sounded as follows :—

b — as in *bed*.   p — as in *pet*.
d — as in *dead*.   r — as in *rope*.
dh — as in *though*.   t — as in *top*.
g — as in *good* [always hard].   th — as in *think*.
h — aspirate.   w — as in *wit* [always conso-
k — as in *king*.   nantal].
l — as in *long*.   y — as in *yet*   [ditto].
m — as in *mat*.   ng — nasal [use as if at the end of a
n — as in *new*.   word, only dropping the vowel].

The language is without the letters *f, v, s,* and *z.*

NOUNS.

There is only one declension of nouns in the Narrinyeri language. There is no distinction of gender in the use of them. They usually end in a vowel, commonly short *i* (pronounced like short *e)* in the nominative case. The stem of the noun is got by casting away this terminal vowel, and the cases are formed by adding to the termination of the stem affixes which form the different cases. The only instances where there is a difference of declension is where the words express human relationships. This we will notice afterwards. In this language the nouns, adjectives, and pronouns are declined in the singular, dual, and plural numbers. The declension of adjectives is, however, uncommon, defective, and irregular.

The genitive case of nouns is formed by the affix *ald*. This not only means *of*, but also, in the case of places, *at ;* as, *Kornald menake*—A man's beard. *Lewin itye Tipald*—He lives at Tip. *Ngape tantir mantald* —I slept in the wurley.

The *ald* is often used by itself, but always with the sense of belonging to, or connection with ; as, *Pinyatowe tyilyi ald amb*—Sugar belonging to or for or connected with rice.

The dative case is formed by the affixes in the singular of *angk* and *ungai*. The former as the signification of *to* and *by*, the latter of *on*, or *by;* yet the terminations are used so interchangeably we can only say that both are forms of the dative; as, *Loru el ap mantangk*—I will go to the hut, house, or wurley. *Tangulun itye ngurlungai*—Stands he on a hill? *Potungai*—On a horse.

The causative is formed in the singular by the affix *il*—evidently an abbreviation of the pronoun *kili* (by him); as, *Kornil mempir napangk,* or *inangk nap*—The man struck his wife.

The ablative is formed by the affix *anmant ;* as, *Nguk* (water), *perk* (well), *anmant* (from)—Water from the well. This form of the ablative is almost confined to places. When it relates to things or persons it is formed by *nend ;* as, *Ngungkura* (first), *ityan* (it), *pintamin* (take away), *ngarrari* (wood), *umanyirinend* (from your), *pelinend* (eye)—First cast the wood out of thine eye. *Kinanyirienend* (from his), *prewirrenend* (side), *yaralin* (flows), *krewe* (blood), *barekar* (water)—From his side there flows blood and water.

It is really difficult to say how many cases the nouns have, because all prepositions are joined as affixes to the nouns to which they relate, but only some of them change their form, according as the noun is in the singular, dual, or plural number.

The following is a list of prepositional affixes and prepositions, shewing where they change in the dual and plural, and where they do not :—

SINGULAR.	DUAL.	PLURAL.		
ald	enggal	an	=	*of, at, upon.*
ungai	ungengul	ungar	==	{ *to, on, in, by, at ;* sometimes used with *instrumentally.*
angk	—	—		—
il	enggul	ar	=	{ *by, through, because of ;* instru- mentally, or causatively.
nend	nend	nend	=	*from, out of.*
—	nenggulund ?			
anyir	—	—	=	{ *of,* the form of the genitive; in pronominal adjectives, *with.*
anmant	—	—	=	*from* a place.

No difference from number :—

ungunai }
ungunel } *in front of.*
ungul }
maremuntunt—*beneath.*
tarangk—*between.*
tepangk—*close to.*
tuntangk—*between two.*

tunti—*in the middle.*
loru—*up.*
moru—*down.*
ambe—*for.*
ngurukwar—*outside, without.*
ngungkura—*before.*

I have given these prepositions here because of their close, and, indeed, peculiarly inseparable relationship to nouns and pronouns.

After much consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the following is the declension of a noun :—

PORLE—*(A CHILD)*.

Singular.

NOMINATIVE	..	..	..	porle, *a child.*
GENITIVE	..	..	..	porlald, *of a child.*
DATIVE	..	..	..	porlangk } *to, with,* or *on*
"	..	..	..	porlungai } *a child.*
CAUSATIVE	..	..	..	porlil, *by a child.*
ABLATIVE	..	..	..	porlenend, *from a child.*
VOCATIVE	..	..	..	porlinda, *O ! child.*

Dual.

NOMINATIVE..	..	..		porlengk, *two children.*
GENITIVE	..	..	..	porlengal, *of two children.*
DATIVE	..	..	..	porlungengun, *to two children.*
CAUSATIVE	..	..	..	porlengul, *by two children.*
ABLATIVE	..	..	..	porlengulund, *from two children.*
"	..	..	..	porlenengulund.
VOCATIVE	..	..	..	porlula, *O ! two children.*

Plural.

NOMINATIVE	..	..	..	porlar, *children.*
GENITIVE	..	..	..	porlan, *of children.*
DATIVE	..	..	..	porlungar, *to with, by,* or *on children.*
CAUSATIVE	..	..	..	porlar, *by children.*
ABLATIVE	..	..	..	porlenend, *from children.*
"	..	..	..	porlannand.
VOCATIVE	..	..	..	porluna, *O ! children.*

Sometimes compound substantives are formed out of simple nouns by the addition of *inyeri (belonging to* or *of),* a verb stem or an adjective. To such words belong peculiar laws of declension. For instance :— *Kurlinyeri,* from *kurle* (head), *inyeri* (belonging to); i.e. a hat or head-dress. *Turninyeri,* from *turne* (foot), and *inyeri* (belonging to); i.e. a boot. *Kurinyinyerengk,* from *kurrengk* (the two shins), *inyerengk* (belonging to two); i.e. a pair of trousers. Now, in such words as these, the prepositional sign would be affixed to the end of the word, as *Kurlinyerald,* of a hat—*Kurrinyerenggal,* of a pair of trousers.

Then, again, we have *yande orn,* from *yande* (old or useless) and *korn* (a man)—i.e. an old man; *yanae imin,* from *yande* (old) and *mimine* (a woman)—i.e. an old woman In these cases the sign of the declension comes between ; as *yant ald orn*—of an old man ; *yant ald imin*—of an old woman.

The particle *urmi* is added to some stems of verbs to make it mean an instrument to do the verb with; as, *kalt urmi*—a spade—a digging thing ; *drek urmi* (a tomahawk), from *drekin* (cutting or chipping) and *urmi* (an instrument). In such words the case endings are added to the end of the whole word.

The word *amalde* is added to the stems of some verbs to make them signify a person who does that action; as, *pett amalde*, from *pettin* (steal) and *amalde* (an agent)—i.e. a thief; *yelpul amalde*, from *yelpulun* (lying) and *amalde* (an agent)—i.e. a liar. These words take also the affix at the end.

Watyeri is a particle used in the same way, and signifies " full of ;" as, *plonggewatyeri*—full of, or possessed by sorcery; *tuniwatyeri*—full of sand; *merkewatyeri*—full of holes.

The particle *urumi* means something used for a purpose; as, *tyetyurumi* from *tyetyin* (anoint) and *urumi* (a means)—i.e. oil, ointment; *muturumi* (a drink), from *muttun* (drinking); *kunkurumi*, from *kunkun* (swallowing), things to swallow—i.e. pills.

The declension of words signifying human relationships is peculiar.

There are different forms of the word meaning a relationship, in order to express whether it is *mine*, *yours*, or *his*. For instance :—

nanghai—*my father.*	narkowalli—*his mother.*
ngaiowe—*your father.*	gelanowe—*my elder brother.*
yikowalle—*his father.*	gelauwe—*your elder brother.*
nainkowa—*my mother.*	gelauwalle—*his elder brother.*
ninkuwe—*your mother.*	

This word *nanghai* (my father) is declined thus :—

NOMINATIVE	nanghai—*my father.*
ACCUSATIVE	nanghaiyin—*in my father.*
GENITIVE	nanghaiyin—*of my father.*
DATIVE	nanghaiyinangk—*to my father.*
CAUSATIVE	nanghaiyininda—*by my father.*
ABLATIVE	nanghaiyinanyir—*from my father.*

FOR—nanghaiyinambe—*for my father.*

Now, in all the words signifying relationships, this form of declension is the same. The accusative and the genitive are alike, and are formed by adding *in* or *an* to the nominative; and every other case is formed by affixing a case particle or case ending to the accusative or genitive case. This is the method, whether the word be of *my*, *your*, or *his* relations. But where the case ending is affixed to the genitive case it is sometimes put between the stem of the word and the case ending; as, *Tartaldan*— of my younger brother.

PRONOUNS.

The personal pronouns are declined in three numbers—singular, dual, and plural. After each pronoun in its full form I shall put the abbreviated, or euphonized, form, commonly used in speaking.

1st Person. Ngape *(I).*

Singular.

Nominative	.. ..	ngape — ap	*I.*
Accusative	.. ..	ngan — an	*me.*
Causative ..	.. ..	ngate — at, atte ..	*by me.*

Dual.

Nominative	.. ..	ngel—angel (pronounced *ang'el)*	*we two.*
Accusative	.. ..	lam — alam	*us two.*
Causative	.. ..	ngel — angel (pronounced *ang'el)*	*by us two.*

Plural.

Nominative	.. ..	ngurn	*we.*
Accusative	.. ..	nam — anam	*us.*
Causative ..	.. ..	ngurn	*by us.*

2nd Person. Nginte *(Thou).*

Singular.

Nominative	.. ..	nginte — ind, inde ..	*thou.*
Accusative	.. ..	ngum — um, m ..	*thee.*
Causative ..	.. ..	nginte, ind	*by thee.*
Vocative	.. ..	nginta — inda	*O thou !*

Dual.

Nominative	.. ..	ngurl — ung-url ..	*you two.*
Accusative	.. ..	lom — olom	*you two.*
Causative ..	.. ..	ngurl — ung-url ..	*by you two.*
Vocative	.. ..	ngurla — ula	*O you two !*

Plural.

Nominative	.. ..	ngun — ūng'-ūn ..	*you.*
Accusative	.. ..	nom — onom	*you.*
Causative ..	.. ..	ngūn — ūng'-ūn ..	*by you.*
Vocative	.. ..	nguna — una	*O you !*

3rd Person. Kitye *(He).*

Singular.

Nominative	.. ..	kitye — itye ..	*he, she, it.*
Accusative	.. ..	kin, in	*him, her, it.*
Causative ..	.. ..	kīl — īl	{ *by him.* { *by her.* { *by it.*

Dual.

Nominative	.. ..	kengk — engk	*they two.*
Accusative	.. ..	kenggun — eng'gūn ..	*them two.*
Causative	.. ..	kenggul — eng'gul ..	*by them two.*

Plural.

Nominative	.. ..	kar — ar	*they.*
Accusative	.. ..	kan — an	*them.*
Causative ..	.. ..	kar — ar	*by them.*

The other cases of pronouns are formed by adding proper case endings to the accusative. The following are the case endings :—

auwe   }   ..   ..   GENITIVE.
auwurle }

anyir .. becomes Genitive in the case of pronominal adjectives.
angk .. Dative — *to, at, in, into, with, on.*
anyir .. *from* — as a result.
ambe .. *for, instead of, for an object* — (as " kak in oura, nak
            " ambour ityan " = *put it here that I may see it.*
            Literally, *foresee it* — nak amb).

The following is a declension of the word *kitye* (he) :—

Singular.

NOMINATIVE ..	.. kitye ..	..	*he.*
ACCUSATIVE	.. kin..	..	.. *him.*
GENITIVE	.. .. kanauwe	..	*of him.*
DATIVE ..	.. kinangk	..	.. *to him.*
CAUSATIVE ..	.. kil	..	.. *by him.*

FROM — kinanyir, *from him.* | FOR — kinambe, *for him.*

Dual.

NOMINATIVE	.. kengk	..	.. *they two.*
ACCUSATIVE ..	.. keng'gun	..	*them two.*
GENITIVE ..	.. keng'gunauwe	..	*of them two.*
DATIVE	.. .. keng'gunangk..	*to them two.*
CAUSATIVE	.. keng'gul ..	..	*by them two.*

FROM—keng'gunanyir, *from them two.* FOR—keng'gunambe, *for them two.*

Plural.

NOMINATIVE ..	.. kar	..	.. *they.*
ACCUSATIVE	.. kan	..	.. *them.*
GENITIVE ,.	.. kanauwe	..	*of them.*
DATIVE ..	.. kanangk	..	.. *to them.*
CAUSATIVE ..	.. kar	..	.. *by them.*

FROM — kananyir, *from them.* | FOR — kanambe, *for them.*

The possessive or adjective pronouns, *my, his, your,* &c., change their terminations in forming their cases ; the *auwe* becomes *anyir* before the termination expressing the case. Thus we say *kinanyerald,* not *kinauweald.* This will be best illustrated by the declension of the possessive pronouns *kinauwe* (his), *keng'gunauwe* (theirs—two), *kanauwe* (their) :—

KINAUWE *(HIS).*

Singular.

NOMINATIVE	..	.. kinauwe	..	*his* (sometimes " kinauwurle").
ACCUSATIVE	..	.. kinauwe.		
GENITIVE ..	..	.. kinanyerald	.. *of his.*	
DATIVE..	..	.. kinanyerangk ..	*to his.*	
CAUSATIVE ..	..	.. kinanyeril ..	.. *by his.*	

FROM—kinanyirenend, *from his.*

Dual.

NOMINATIVE ..	..	keng'gunauwe..	*theirs (two).*
ACCUSATIVE	..	.. keng'gunauwe.	
GENITIVE	..	.. keng'gunanyirald	*of theirs (two).*
DATIVE ..	..	.. keng'gunanyirangk	*to theirs (two).*
CAUSATIVE	..	.. keng'gunanyeril ..	*by theirs (two).*

FROM—keng'gunanyirenend, *from theirs (two).*

Plural.

NOMINATIVE	..	..	kanauwe	..	..	*their.*
ACCUSATIVE		..	kanauwe.			
GENITIVE	..	..	kananyirald	..		*of their.*
DATIVE	..	..	kananyirangk	..		*to their.*
CAUSATIVE	..	..	kananyiril	..		*by their.*

FROM—kananyirenend, *from their.*

The pronoun following a transitive verb would be in the dative or genitive case; as, *Ngate mempir kinanyirangk kurl*—I struck his head; not *kinauwe kurle.* At the same time there are many instances in which the *auwe* would be used in an objective sense; as, *Kil pleppin kenggunauwe pŭlar*—He touched the eyes of these two.

The demonstrative pronouns are *hikke* (this), *hityekatye* (this one), and *naiye* (that).

The following are the forms of the demonstrative pronoun *hik :*—

	SINGULAR.	DUAL.	PLURAL.
NOMINATIVE	hikkai	henggengk	harar.
ACCUSATIVE	hin	henggun	haran.
ABLATIVE	h īl	henggul	harar.

Also—HITYEKATYE *(THIS ONE)* [emphatic].

	SINGULAR.	DUAL.	PLURAL.
NOMINATIVE	hityekatye	hengenekengk	harnakar.
ACCUSATIVE	hityenekatye.		

The pronoun *naiye* (that) has the following forms :—

	SINGULAR.	DUAL.	PLURAL.
NOMINATIVE	naiye	nakak	narar.
ACCUSATIVE	orne	—	narar.
GENITIVE	ornauwe.		
DATIVE	ornangk.		

The interrogative pronouns *nganggi* (who?) and *minye* (what?) are used in the following forms in the various cases :—

NGANGGĬ *(WHO?)*

NOMINATIVE	.. ..	nganggĭ—*who.*
DATIVE		{ nak—*to whom.* { nak an angk—*to whom (plural).*
GENITIVE		{ nauwe { nauwurlĭ } *whose or whom.*
CAUSATIVE		ngandĭ—*by whom.*
ABLATIVE		nambĭ—*for whom.*

MINYE *(WHAT?)*

NOMINATIVE	minyĭ—*what.*
DATIVE	mek—*to what.*
GENITIVE	mek—*of what.*
ABLATIVE	mekimbe—*for what (what for).*
CAUSATIVE	{ mengyĕ—*by what (how).* { minyandai—*what times (how often).* { minyurti—*what sort.* { minyai munyarai—*what number.* { mindĕ—*what reason, why.* { murel—*with what intention.*

VERBS.

The verb in native has a close relationship to the adjective, and a tendency to assume the form of a participle. Thus, *Kaikundun il ityan* is more nearly expressed by the English "Calling by him to him" than by "He calls him." *Lewin itye* is better expressed by "He is sitting" than by "He sits."

The Narrinyeri language possesses the property of being able to form words out of itself with much facility. Names are generally invented by natives for European objects, and words are formed to express actions introduced by the colonists. For instance :—*Taminyun* is "to shoot ;" and it is compounded of the words *tamin* (to point) and *yun* (the sound of a gun).

But we see this tendency to build up words in the language itself in words built up to express native ideas ; as :—

PILGERUWALLIN—" Being greedy ;" from *pulkeri* (greedy) and *wallin* (being).

KONKUWARRIN—" Sending away ;" from *konk* (apart), *u* (expressive of imperative), and *warrin* (to make).

LAMATYERI—" Wood for a fire ;" from *lammin* (carrying on the back) and *atyeri* (belonging to—i.e., that which is carried on the back).

ANANGKWARRIN—" Preparing," " getting ready ;" from *anangk*, or *kanangk*, or *ityanangk* (the dative of the accusative form of the third personal pronoun *kityan*, *kin*, or *kan)*, and *warrin* (making); literally—making towards it.

The four principal classes of verbs are :—(1) The simple verbs ; as, *mempin* (striking), *takkin* (eating), *ngoppun* (walking), *lulun* (breaking), *nampulun* (hiding). (2) Verbs with the termination *wallin*, signifying " existing ;" as *tunkuwallin* (playing), *yuntuwallin* (crowding). (3) Verbs with the termination *warrin*, meaning " causing, making ;" as *nunkuwarrin* (doing right), *wirrangwarrin* (doing wrong), *wurtuwarrin* (saturating with water). (4) Verbs ending in *mindin*, as *kldeimindin* (fetching).

I will now proceed to give the conjugation of the aboriginal native transitive verb—

LAK—*(To Spear)*.

INDICATIVE MOOD—*Present Tense*.

Singular.	*Dual.*
Ngate yan lakkin—I spear him	Ngel yan lakkin—We two spear him
Nginte yan lakkin—Thou spearest him	Ngurl yan lakkin—Ye two spear him
Kile yan lakkin—He spears him.	Kenggul yan lakkin—They two spear him.

Plural.

Ngurn yan lakkin—We spear him
Ngun yan lakkin—Ye spear him
Kar yan lakkin—They spear him.

Past Tense.

Singular.	Dual.
Ngati yan lakkir—I speared him	Ngel yan lakkir—We two speared him
Nginti yan lakkir—Thou spearedst him	Ngurl yan lakkir—You two speared him
Kile yan lakkir—He speared him.	Kenggul yan lakkir–They two speared him

Plural.

Ngurn yan lakkir — We speared him
Ngun yan lakkir — You two speared him
Kar yan lakkir — They two speared him.

Remote Past Tense.

Singular.	Dual.
Ngati yan lak emb—I did spear him	Ngel yan lak emb—We two did spear him
Nginte yan lak emb—Thou didst spear him	Ngurl yan lak emb-You two did spear him
Kile yan lak emb—He did spear him.	Kenggul yan lak emb—They two did spear him.

Plural.

Ngurn yan lak emb — We did spear him
Ngun yan lak emb — You did spear him
Kar yan lak emb — They did spear him.

First Future (Simple Future).

Singular.	Dual.
Ngati yan lakkani—I will spear him	Ngel yan lakkani—We two will spear him
Nginte yan lakkani — Thou wilt spear him	Ngurl yan lakkani—Ye two will spear him
Kile yan lakkani—He will spear him.	Kenggul yan lakkani-They two will spear him.

Plural.

Ngurn yan lakkani — We will spear him
Ngun yan lakkani — You will spear him
Kar yan lakkani — They will spear him.

Second Future (Intentional).

Singular.	Dual.
Ngate lak el ityan—I will [i.e., intend to] spear him	Ngeli lak el ityan —We two will spear him
Nginte lak el ityan—Thou wilt spear him	Ngurle lak el ityan—You two will spear him
Kile lak el ityan—He will spear him.	Kenggul lak el ityan—They two will spear him.

Plural.

Ngurn lak el ityan — He will spear him
Ngun lak el ityan — You will spear him
Kar lak el ityan — They will spear him.

Third Future (Predictive).

Singular.	Dual.
Lakkin el atte ityan—I will spear him	Lakkin el a-ngel ityan—We two will spear him
Lakkin el inde ityan — You will spear him	Lakkin el ungurl ityan—Ye two will spear him
Lakkin el il ityan—He will spear him.	Lakkin el engul ityan—They two will spear him.

Plural.

Lakkin el ungurn ityan — We will spear him
Lakkin el ungun ityan — You will spear him
Lakkin el ar ityan — They will spear him.

Other Forms of the Future.

Nginte el our ityan lak — Thou must spear him.
Lak amb el ityan? — Shall I spear him?
Tarno lak amb ityan? — Shall I not spear him?

Repetitive Tense.

Singular.	Dual.
Ngati lak unganyi—I spear again	Ngel lak unganyi—We two spear again
Nginte lak unganyi—Thou spearest again	Ngurl lak unganyi—You two spear again
Kile lak unganyi—He spears again.	Kenggul lak unganye—They two spear again.

Plural.

Ngurn lak unganye — We spear again
Ngun lak unganye — You spear again
Kar lak unganye — They spear again.

REFLECTIVE MOOD.

Singular.	Dual.
Ngap an angk laggelir—I speared myself	Ngele nangk laggelir — We two speared ourselves
Nginte nangk laggelir—Thou spearedst thyself	Ngurle nangk laggelir—Ye two speared yourselves
Kitye nangk laggelir—He speared himself.	Kenggenangk laggelir—They two speared themselves.

Plural.

Ngurn an angk laggelir — We speared ourselves
Ngun en angk laggelir — Ye speared yourselves
Kan en angk laggelir — They speared themselves.

RECIPROCAL MOOD.

Ngele nangk laggel amb — Let us two spear each other.

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

Singular.	Dual.
Lak our inde—Do thou spear	Ngel oura lakkin—Let us two spear
Il oura lak—Let him spear	Ngurl our lakkin—Let you two spear
	Kenggul our lakkin—Let them two spear.

Plural.

Ngurn our lakkin — Let us spear
Ngun. our lakkin — Do you spear
Kar our lakkin — Let them spear.

OPTATIVE MOOD ("MAY").

Singular.	Dual.
Ngati in anyura lakkin—I may spear him	Ngel in anyura lakkin—We two may spear him
Nginte in anyura lakkin—Thou mayest spear him	Ngurl in anyura lakkin--Ye two may spear him
Kile in anyura lakkin—He may spear him.	Kenggul in anyura lakkin—They two may spear him.

Plural.

Ngurn in anyura lakkin — We may spear him
Ngun in anyura lakking — Ye may spear him
Kur in anyura lakkin — They may spear him.

OPTATIVE (" COULD " OR " WOULD ").

Singular.

Lak ilde atte ityan—I would spear him

Lak ild inde ityan—Thou wouldest spear
him

Lak ild ile ityan—He would spear him.

Dual.

Lak ilde ngel ityan—We two would spear
him

Lak ilde ngurl ityan—Ye two would
spear him   [spear him.

Lak ilde engul ityan—They two would

Plural.

Lak ilde ngurn ityan—We would spear him

Lak ilde ungun ityan—Ye would spear him

Lak ilde ar ityan—They would spear him.

PROHIBITIVE MOOD.

Lak ē—Spear not.   Tauo ityan lak ityan—Don't spear him.

(" MUST ").

Laggel el our ap—I must spear

Laggel el our ind—Thou must spear

Laggel el our itye—He must spear.

&c.,   &c.

INFINITIVE MOOD (PRESENT).

Lak—Spear [the idea absolute]

Lak uramb—For the purpose of spearing [of an instrument or weapon].

PARTICIPLES.

Laggelin—Spearing. | Laggelir—Speared.

PASSIVE.

Singular.

Ngan lakkir—I am speared

Ngum lakkir—Thou art speared

Kin lakkir—He is speared.

Dual.

Lam lakkir—We two are speared

Lom lakkir—You two are speared

Kenggun lakkir—They two are speared.

Plural.

Nam lakkir—We are speared

Nom lakkir—Ye are speared

Kan lakkir—They are speared.

NOTES.

1.—I chose the word *lakkin* for the paradigm of a native verb because
it contains all the inflections which I know of. The word *lakkin* means,
primarily, " piercing ;" as, *Ngate lakkin itye koye*—I pierce a basket
(i.e., make a basket by the piercing through and through of the rushes
as it is woven or sewn together). But the word is mostly used for casting
a spear—darting ; and, from that, aiming any missile or throwing a stone
at any person is *lakkin*.

2.—Although I have given an " indicative mood," yet the peculiarity
of the participial character of the native verb must not be lost sight of.
There must necessarily be in every language a form of expressing the
verb, equivalent to our indicative form—and this I have endeavored to
give ; that is, the inflection of the verb, with the accompanying pronouns
—both causative and objective—which conveys the indicative thought.

But yet it must not be supposed that the words *Ngate ityan lakkin*, for instance, mean "By him it spearing;" although that is the nearest to it in English. Yet the word *lakkin* does not mean "spearing," but, as the aborigines say in broken English, "spear em." They say, "I spear em it kangaroo:" this is the native idiom. In exhibiting the indicative mood I have supposed the speaker to say, "I spear *him;*" but of course I might have put it, "I spear *thee*," or "I spear *you*," and so on. In that case the objective form of the second personal pronoun would have to be used—as *Ngate um lakkin*, "I spear thee;" or, *Ngate onom lakkin*, "I spear you;"—and so on, through all the tenses.

3.—The transitive verbs are distinguished from the intransitive by the former using the causative case of the pronoun; whereas the latter uses the simple nominative. This will be seen in the following conjugation of the verb :—

NGAI *(T COME.)*

INDICATIVE MOOD—*Present Tense.*

Singular.	*Dual.*
Ngaiin ap—I come	Ngaiin ngel—We two come
Ngaiin inda—Thou comest	Ngaiin ung'url—Ye two come
Ngaiin itye—He comes.	Ngaiin engk—They two come.

Plural.

Ngaiin ung'urn—We come
Ngaiin ung'une—You come
Ngaiin ar—They come.

Past Tense.

Singular.	*Dual.*
Puntir ap—I came	Puntir ang'el—We two came
Puntir inde—Thou camest	Puntir ung'url—You two came
Puntir itye—He came.	Puntir engk—They two came.

Plural.

Puntir arn—We came
Puntir ung'une—You came
Puntir ar—They came.

Future Tense.

Singular.	*Dual.*
Ngai el ap—I will come	Ngai el ang'el—We two will come
Ngai el inda—Thou wilt come	Ngai el ung'url—You two will come
Ngai el itye—He will come.	Ngai el engk—They two will come.

Plural.

Ngai el arn—We will come
Ngai el ung'une—You will come
Ngai el ar—They will come.

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

Koh	Come	Ngai akhi ..	Come here.
Ngai war..	Do come		

OPTATIVE OR POTENTIAL MOOD.

Singular.

Ngap inanye ngai—I may come
Ngint inanye ngai—Thou mayest come
Kity inanye ngai—He may come.

Dual.

Ngel inanye ngai—We two may come
Ngurl inanye ngai—Ye two may come
Kengk inanye ngai—They two may come.

Plural.

Ngurn inonye ngai—We may come
Ngune inanye ngai—Ye may come
Kar inanye ngai—They may come.

INFINITIVE MOOD.

Ngai .. .. To come.

PARTICIPLES.

Puntin .. .. Coming | Puntani .. About to come.

4.—There appears to be different classes of verbs in the Narrinyeri language. They are distinguished by the variation or non-variation of the word which expresses the indicative mood when it expresses the present participle. For instance—*Ngati yan merippin* signifies "I cut it:" In this case the word *merippin* expresses the indicative present, first person. It is also *merippin* for "cutting"—that is the present participle. Then *Ngati yan drekin* is "I chip it;" but it is not *drekin* in the present participle, but *dretulun.* So that we thus have two classes of verbs—the first does not change in assuming the participial form, as *mempin* (strike), *pempin* (give), *morokkun* (seize); the second does change in assuming the participial form, as *pornun* (die), *pornelin*, (dying); *nampulun* (hide), *nampundelin* (hiding); *nyrippin* (wash), *nyribbelin* (washing); *milipulun* (speak a foreign language), *milipundun* (speaking a foreign language). Possibly a more exact knowledge of the language might reveal subdivisions of these classes.

5.—Some verbs change from the intransitive to the transitive form by the addition of *undun* to the root, instead of *ulun*—or a " g" sound instead of a " k" sound; as, *nampulun ap* (I hide), *nampundun atte ityan* (I hide it); *yelkulun ap* (I move), *yelkundun atte ityan* (I move it); *pingkin ap* (I fall), *pinggen atte ityan* (I throw it down).

The meaning "cause to be" is given to adjectives of verbal form by the addition of *mindin;* as, *nguldammulun* (tired), *nguldammulimindin* (making tired).

6.—The two auxiliary verbs in most common use are *wallin* (being), and *warrin* (making, or causing). They are affixed to adjectives; as, *nunkeri* (good), *nunkowallin* (being good), *nunkowarrin* (making good); *piltengi* (strong), *piltengwallin* (being strong), *piltengwarrin* (making strong); *wirrangwallin* (being bad), *wirrangwarrin* (making bad).

7.—The word *ellin* also means " being—state of being," and sometimes " doing." It is very irregular in its use. It is the nearest word in the language to our verb " to be," It is scarcely to be expected that such an

abstract verb should be found perfectly developed in a barborous tongue.
The use of this word *ellin*, and also of *ennin*, is very difficult to under-
stand. *El* appears to mean " intention, for or towards," whether that in-
tention be for *doing*, *wishing for*, or *being :* *ellin* expresses the intention
satisfied. For instance, take the following table of the words :—

El—I wish to do	{ Ellin—Doing Ellir—Done Ellani—About to do
El—I wish for	Ellin—Having
El—I shall be	{ Ellin—Being Ellir—Has been
En—Do	{ Ennin—Doing Ennani—Will do Ennir—Done.

The following native sentences furnish instances of this :—*En al yan*,
" Do with it"—i.e., " do it.' ' *Luk ap atye ellir*, " Thus I it did," " I did
so." *Ngati yan ennani*, " I will do it." *Ngate yan ellani*, " *I* will do it,"
" By me it will be done." *Kunyitye ellir*, " Enough, he has been"—i.e.,
" He is dead.

8.—The stem of the word *warrin* is commonly used as the sign of the
imperative and interrogative. The stem *war* is used and pronounced
nearly like the English word " our." The following are specimens of its
use :—*Kung war*, " Do hear." *Nak our*, " Do see." *Ngai war*, " Do
come." *Nginta wara*, or *ngint oura*, " Do thou" (a phrase meaning
" Get out of the way"). *Ngint our*, or *war*, " Do thou"—i.e., " Do thou
do it." *Mant our*, " Do slowly." *Murrumil our*, and *murrunmour*,
" Make haste—Do hasten." *Yelkul war*, or *our*, " Do move." *Mint
oura*, ` Do to me thou" (it is equivalent to " Give me a bit"). *Kahk in
oura*, " Put it here." *Yang ouri?* " Where do you go?"

9.—In expressions which mean *going* and *coming*, it is very common
for the words " go" and " come" to be omitted. The following are in-
stances of this practice ,—

Loldu el itye *Loru el itye* }	Up will he ; i.e., " He will go."
Mare el itye ..	Down will he; i.e., "He will come."
Loru el ap *Loldu el ap* }	Up will I; i.e., I will go."
Laldan an ..	Up it; i.e., " Fetch it."
Lare itye ..	Down he; i.e., " He has come."
Moru an ..	Down him; i.e., " He has gone down."
Moru el ap ..	Down will I; i.e., I will go down."

Loru means up, *moru* means down ; *loldu* also means up, and *mare*
down.

10.—The stem or root of verbs very often consist of one or two vowel
sounds and two or three consonantal sounds. Thus *pet* is the stem of
the word *pettin* (to steal); *morok* is the stem of the verb *morokkun* (to
fetch). I have said " very often"—I might have said " always," but
that I do not feel quite certain; but this rule is very common.

ADJECTIVES.

Some adjectives in the native language are declined like nouns; and some of them have such a verbal form as to show they are closely related to verbs. *Nunkeri* (good) and *wirrangi* (bad) are examples of the former class; *talin* (heavy), *balpin* (white), *kinemin* (dirty), *kinpin* (sweet), *prityin* (strong), are examples of the latter class. Sometimes an adjective is used in both forms—as *balpe* and *balpin*, both of which signify " white." The following is the declension of the word—

Nunkeri — (Good).

Singular.

NOMINATIVE	..	..	..	nunkeri, *good* [noun understood].
GENITIVE	..	..	..	nunggurald, *of good*.
DATIVE	..	..	..	nunggurungai, *to good*.
CAUSATIVE	..	..	..	nungguril, *by good*.

Dual.

NOMINATIVE	..	..	..	nunggerengk, *two good*.
GENITIVE	..	..	..	nunggerengul, *of two good*.
DATIVE	..	..	..	nunggerungengul, *to two good*.
CAUSATIVE	..	..	..	nunggerengul, *by two good*.

Plural.

NOMINATIVE	..	..	..	nunkerar, *good*.
GENITIVE	..	..	..	nungeran, *of good*.
DATIVE	..	..	..	nunggerungar, *to good*.
CAUSATIVE	..	..	..	nunggerar, *by good*.

The following is the declension of the adjective—

Ngruwar — (All).

NOMINATIVE	..	..	..	..	ngruwar, *all*.
GENITIVE	..	..	..	..	ngruntungar, *of all*.
DATIVE	..	..	..	..	ngruntungar, *to all*.
ACCUSATIVE	..	..	..	..	ngruwar, *all*.
VOCATIVE	..	..	..	..	ngrūwūn, *O all!*
CAUSATIVE	..	..	..	..	ngruntar, *by all*.
FROM—ngruntenend, *from all*			WITH—ngruntungar, *with all*.		

Adjectives have no degrees of comparison: the only approach to such is found in the word *muralappi* (small), *muralappeol* (very small). *Ol* is the common diminutive particle for adjectives and substantives.

The natives only count to three —*Yammalai* or *yammalaitye*, " one;" *ninggengk* or *ningkaiengk*, " two;" *neppaldar*, " three." *Ngunkur* is " first:" there are no words for " second " or " third." All numbers above three are expressed by *Ngruwar* (many). Some adjectives are formed from adverbs; as *karloinyeri*, or *karloanyeri*—from *karlo* (to-day) and *inyeri* (belonging), and meaning " now;" *klauoanyeri*, or *kaldowanyeri*—from *kaldow* (a long time) and *inyeri* (belonging to), and meaning " old;" and *konkinyeri* (by itself, alone).

ADVERBS.

The various adverbs will be found in a vocabulary of the language. I only wish here to refer to some words of this class in which a nice distinction in meaning is observed.

ADVERBS OF TIME.

Karlo—To-day.	Yun—By-and-by.
(Karloanyeri—New.)	Palli—While, by-and-by.
Hik—Now.	Rauwul—A long time ago.
Watanggrau—Yesterday.	Kaldau—A long time.
Ngrekkald—To-morrow.	Ngurintand—Often.

ADVERBS OF NEGATION.

Tarno—No, not.	Tarno el—Don't do.
Tarnalo—No more.	Tarnalin—Not yet.
Tarnalo—Never.	Nowaiy—None.
Tauo—Don't (imperative).	Nowaiy ellin—No more (i.e., of anything).

ADVERBS OF PLACE.

Yangi—Where ? (interrogative).	Yangalli—Where is he ?
Yarnd—Of where ? Whence ?	Kiuau—Where (relative).
Yauo—Yak—Where to ?	Aiau—By where.

[Instances—*Manti kiuau tantani ap*, " The wurley where I shall sleep."
Yak al inda tantani ? " Where will you sleep ?"
Ngurlung aiau, " By where the hill is."]

Ku-un—Far off. [As, *Ngap tangulun ku-un*, " I stand far off." *Nginte tangulun ku-un*, " Thou standest far off." *Kitye tangulun ku-u*, " He stands far off." *Kengk tangulun ku-u*, " They two stand far off." *Kar tangulun kuar-un*, " They stand far off."]

Akhé—Here.	Ondu—Over there.
Alyikke—Here.	Yarnd inde ?—Whence thou ?
Alyenik—This here place.	Yauo ande ?—Whither thou ?
Alye—Here.	

ADVERBS OF TIME.

Yaral ?—When ? (Interrogative).	Ungunuk—When. (Relative).

The word *wunye* (then) is commonly joined, as an affix, to pronouns, as—

Wunyap—Then I.	Wunyitve—Then he.
Wunyatte—Then by me, i.e., Then I (casuative).	Wunyinde—Then thou.
	Wunyungune—Then you.
Wunyil—Then by him, i.e., Then he (casuative).	Wunyar—Then they.
	Wunyel—Then will.

The words *uk, ukke, luk*, and *lun*, which have the meaning of *similarity* —" so," " thus," " way" may be illustrated by the following examples—

Luk, " So." *Lun*, " Thus." *Ukke*, " Way."
Luk u, or *lun u*—" So, thus "—" He did it thus." *Luk itye yarnin*—" Thus he speaks."
Lun ellin—" So being, Like."   *Luk ugge*—" Like this one."
Hikkai ukke—" This way." " This road."
Hil amb uk—" For this way" (equivalent to " because ").
Lun uk—" Thus."   *Ngo uk ap*—" I go so."

The word *ambe* has the force both of a conjunction and preposition; it may be rendered both "instead of" and "because :"—as, *Kaldowamp or amb*, "For a long time :" *Hil amb uk*, "For this way, because :" *In amb ai*, "Only for it:" *Ald amb anai*, "For my"—as *Pinyatowe ald amb anai pelberri*, "Sugar for my tea."

The conjunction "and" is not known in the language.

SYNTACTICAL NOTES

I.

The form of the verb remains unchanged, whatever be the number and person of nominative, in intransitive verb, and causative in transitive verbs—as, *Ngap lewin*, "I sit ;" *Kar lewin*, "They sit ;" *Kil ityn pettin* "He steals it ;" *Kar ityan pettin*, "They steal it."

II.

The prepositional particle in pronouns is always an affix to the accusative case—as, *Inangk*, "To him ;" *Kanangk*, "To them ;" *Pempir il umangk*, "He gave to thee." In all these *angk* signifies the preposition "to."

III.

Transitive verbs are followed by an accusative pronoun—as *kil* (by him); *Ityan* "him," *ngolkir* "was bitten," i.e., "He bit him."

IV.

Pronominal adjectives are always in the same number and case as the nouns with which they are connected—as, *Kinanyirangk taldumandangk*, "To his house."

V.

The diminutive of nouns is always placed after the case-ending of the noun—as, *Porlaldol*, "Of a little child ;" *Porlarol*, "Of little children."

VI.

Very often, when an adjective and noun come together, the case-ending will be attached to the adjective, but omitted from the noun—as, *Nunggarald korn*, "Of a good man :" here *ald*, signifying the genitive, is only attached to the adjective, and not to the noun *korn* (a man).

VII.

The sign of a transitive verb is a noun or pronoun in the causative; and of an intransitive verb a noun or pronoun in the nominative—*Kil ityan drekin,* " He cuts it:" *Kitye tangulun,* " He stands."

VIII.

Demonstrative pronouns agree with the nouns which they point to in number and case—as, *Hɪkkai korn,* " This man ; " *Harnakar kornar,* " These men ;" *Ornangk nunkungai,* " In that day ;" *Ornangk koyungai,* " In that basket."

IX.

The distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs, where the same English word expresses both, must be carefully observed. Thus— *lulun* (breaking) is intransitive, *luwun* (breaking) is transitive ; *nyrangkin* (burning) is intransitive, *kulkun* (burning) is transitive.

X.

The word "where" *(kiuau)*, which is only used relatively, must be carefully distinguished from *yangi* (where), which is only used interrogatively. Also the word *ungunuk,* or *ungun,* which mean " when "—used relatively—must be distinguished from *yaral,* which means " when " in the interrogative sense.

XI

Although the stem of the verb may be said to be the infinitive present, yet the particle *uramb* (meaning " for the purpose of ") is always used when a verb is governed in the infinitive by another verb ;—as, *Kil pempir inangk kaltumi kalturamb an tuni,* " By him was a giving to him a spade for the purpose of digging the ground "—i.e., He gave him a spade to dig the ground. *Pempir il an angk nakkari takuramb,* " He gave me a duck to eat."