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Primitive Hunters of Australia

BY

WILFRID D. HAMBLY

ASSISTANT CURATOR OF AFRICAN ETHNOLOGY

12 Plates in Photogravure and 1 Map



ANTHROPOLOGY

LEAFLET 32

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

CHICAGO

1936

The Anthropological Leaflets of Field Museum are designed to give brief, non-technical accounts of some of the more interesting beliefs, habits and customs of the races whose life is illustrated in the Museum's exhibits.

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, DIRECTOR



AUSTRALIA

INDIAN OCEAN

110 120 130 140 150

TORRES STRAIT

CAPE YORK

MELVILLE PORT ESSINGTON

GULF OF CARPENTARIA

MARA ANULA

NORTH AUSTRALIA

PITTA PITTA TRIBE

QUEENSLAND

MIABARA MABI EUAHLAYI BRISBANE

KAMILAROI

NEW SOUTH WALES

SYDNEY

VICTORIA

BASS STRAIT

TASMANIA

MELBOURNE

LAKE TORRENS

LAKE EYRE

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

DIERI

WARRAMUNGA KAITISHI ARUNTA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BROOKES DAMPIER LAND KIMBERLEY

ASHBURTON

GASCOYNE

MURCHISON MT. MARGARET

KOOLGARDIE

PERTH

YILGARN

GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT

KING GEORGE SOUND

ADELAIDE

SCALE

0 50 100 200 300 400 500 miles

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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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LEAFLET NUMBER 32

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PREFACE

Since the foundation of Field Museum of Natural History in 1893, Australian ethnological material has been acquired by collection, purchase, and exchange.

In the year 1933 a representative collection was installed in Hall A1, which is an annex to the Hall of Melanesian Ethnology. The main purpose of this leaflet is to make the exhibit more interesting and understandable to the general public and to the many students who visit the Museum.

With this purpose in view the leaflet avoids theoretical questions, and is confined to a summary of generally accepted facts. But a bibliography has been added to aid those whose interest has been aroused by the collections, and the items have been selected with a view to introducing beginners to the facts and problems of Australian ethnology.

WILFRID D. HAMBLY

PRIMITIVE HUNTERS OF AUSTRALIA

CONDITIONS OF HUMAN LIFE

The area of Australia is about three million square miles, which is almost the same as the land surface of the United States of America. Since a large part of Australia is situated within the tropics, a high temperature is one of the chief climatic factors. But great disparity of climate has to be noted, for in the northeast, especially on the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, heat and moisture are combined, while, on the contrary, the central areas have intense heat and dryness.

The principal mountains form a long chain extending along the eastern side of the continent, which has the greatest rainfall and the most permanent rivers, though even in this area destructive droughts are ruinous to sheep breeders. Almost the whole of the western half of Australia is a plateau a thousand feet in height with many short ranges and detached hills distributed over the surface. Extending from north to south in the central portion are low, arid plains.

Consideration of the plants and animals of Australia indicates that the continent has long been separated from all other lands, and a clear line of demarcation exists, separating the flora and fauna of Asia from those of Australia and the large island of New Guinea.

The principal trees of Australia are species of eucalyptus. Cedars grow on the higher slopes of the eastern mountains, tropical vegetation flourishes in the moist heat of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and, as an extreme contrast to this type of plant life, the drought-resisting kangaroo grass and salt bush are characteristic of the arid interior regions. Many kinds of acacias abound.

The indigenous animals belong to the oldest species of living mammals. Of the marsupials, or pouched mammals,

the largest is the kangaroo. Others are the wombat, koala, and bandicoot, while the strangest is the platypus or duck-bill, which is an egg-laying mammal. Crocodiles are numerous in the northern rivers. Poisonous snakes, spiders, and scorpions are commonly found.

The largest bird is the emu, which runs quickly though unable to fly. Other birds of importance are cockatoos, parrots, eagles, hawks, and owls; also some migratory birds such as ducks and geese.

Although Australia has many large modern cities, for example, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth, the country as a whole is undeveloped. The white population, numbering about eight millions, is small in comparison with the great area. But development of schemes of irrigation on a large scale, combined with improvement in transport of products from outlying regions to the coast, may lead to a great economic expansion.

If this takes place, the decline of native culture and population will be accelerated; for people of simple hunting communities are destroyed by, rather than assimilated with, an advanced culture. It is true that some aborigines may be seen in towns where they are employed in menial work, and on sheep ranches where they are useful as herders and trackers, but decline in numbers has been the rule. Though no reliable estimate can be given, probably the total aboriginal population of pure-blooded natives and half-breeds does not exceed 50,000.

Australia was known to a limited extent by Chinese fishermen, who centuries ago visited the north coasts to secure trepang (sea-slugs), but even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries European exploration was confined to the coasts.

The first recorded visit to Australia was made by a Portuguese in the year 1601. Five years later Torres, a Spaniard, sailed through the northern strait which bears his name. The west and northwest coasts were explored by Dutch navigators from Java during the first half of

the seventeenth century. To these newly discovered lands the name of New Holland was given. Captain Dampier came to Australia in 1688 and made a landing on the northwest coast, but the first voyages having definite scientific surveys as their objects were made by Captain Cook in 1770 and later years.

In 1788 the first European settlement was established on the east coast at Botany Bay near Port Jackson, to which some English convicts were transported. This arrival formed the nucleus of a colony subsequently known as New South Wales, and the establishment of Victoria and Queensland followed later. The discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851, and later in other areas, gave a great impetus to immigration, while sheep breeding, fruit growing, and cultivation of wheat became staple occupations.

Usually the aborigines were hostile, and, though instances of faithful guides and trackers are not wanting, explorers of the interior ran the risk of death from thirst, starvation, and treachery. Much of the early exploration was carried out by settlers who, especially in times of drought, pushed their way over the eastern mountains to the plains beyond. Driving their cattle from one water-hole to another they steadily advanced, continually struck new trails, and so opened up additional areas for settlement, but heavy losses were sustained by intermittent droughts which were sometimes severe during a period of several years.

In addition to these unorganized explorations of squatters, the government gave financial aid to scientific investigators, among whom Sturt was one of the early pioneers. His privations during reconnaissance of the Murray-Darling region in the southeast of the continent left him blind for several years. He finished his river voyage in 1829, but was unable to continue his explorations until 1844. Sturt's last journey was an attempt to cross the continent from south to north, but he was unfortunate in experiencing an unusually severe drought.

Consequently, he was obliged to return without having accomplished his purpose, although two years had been occupied in the attempt.

The name of Leichardt is prominent in the annals of exploration of northeast Australia. In 1844 he left Brisbane to journey in a northwesterly direction through Queensland to Port Essington on the northern coast, near Dampier Gulf. After fifteen months of arduous travel the explorer reached his destination. In 1848 Leichardt attempted to cross Australia from east to west. A letter sent from western Queensland reported that all was well, but this was the last information received concerning the leader and his eight companions, of whom no trace has ever been found, notwithstanding several exploratory investigations.

At the same time that Leichardt was attempting his traverse of the continent, Kennedy essayed an exploration of the coast bordering the Cape York peninsula. Despite the faithful services of his native boy, he and several companions were killed by the aborigines. The colored servant reached the coast carrying Kennedy's notes, and owing to the prompt action of a schooner's crew two of the explorers were rescued.

The explorer Eyre received a rigorous early training as a settler and stock-owner, who drove his cattle from the region of Sydney to undeveloped areas near Port Phillip and Adelaide. In 1840 he set out to explore unknown country north of Adelaide, but was obliged to return after discovering a large salt lake which has received his name.

The greatest exploit of Eyre was a journey along the shore of the Great Bight in the southwest to King George's Sound in Western Australia. Weakened by thirst, and harassed by bands of natives who killed his companion, named Baxter, Eyre continued his desert exploration until he arrived at Albany after following a route of 1,300 miles through inhospitable country.

In 1858 McDowall Stuart, who had served as an explorer with Sturt, set out to explore the country north of Lake Torrens, and contrary to popular belief he was able to report good pasture where interior deserts had been thought to exist. Encouraged by this success he again attempted two years later to make his way into the heart of the continent. He explored new country, but was obliged to return owing to the hostility of natives.

Undaunted by this failure McDowall Stuart once more set out in 1862. On this occasion he crossed the continent from south to north along a median line which brought him to the middle of the north coast. His report showed that the building of a telegraph line was possible and along this route the first wire was installed in 1872. Present day engineering schemes contemplate a railway from south to north approximately along the route followed by the first transcontinental explorer. The introduction of camels into Australia by Sir Thomas Elder in 1866 has been of great service in modern exploration and transport, especially in the central and western regions.

This brief survey of the continent leads to a consideration of the native tribes whose weapons, tools, ornaments, domestic appliances, and magical apparatus are shown in Hall A1, Cases 1-5.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Throughout the continent the physical appearance of the Australian aborigines tends toward uniformity, a fact which gives further support to the evidence of long isolation as afforded by a study of the animals and plants. A mixing of races of different physical types produces many varieties, but, on the contrary, isolation favors the production of one specialized species.

This general statement does not imply that no physical differences exist among bands of aborigines in different parts of Australia. Even an examination of photographs shows local differences, but uniformity is far more impressive than variations. Some description of physical characters is necessary, but a correct impression is most easily obtained by reference to the types illustrated on Plates II, IV-VI.

Australian aborigines should not be confounded with Negroes, although the Australian's dark chocolate skin color and the breadth of the nose may lead to that erroneous conclusion. A glance at the hair, which is wavy, and not woolly like that of Negroes, at once brings out an important difference. Moreover, the bodily hair of Australians is often profuse, while that of the Negro is scanty.

Again, the lips of a typical Negro are thick and everted, while these traits are lacking in an Australian. Certain details of the palate, the teeth, and the roots of molars are distinguishing features of Australians.

Australians are moderately tall and slim, but despite their meagre development and spindly legs, no people could show more endurance in their life as hunters and food gatherers. All physical evidence considered, Australians may be classified as part of an early Australoid group to which the Veddas of Ceylon and the Toalas of the Celebes probably belong.

The physical anthropology of Australian aborigines may be technically considered by reference to W. L. H. Duckworth (1904) and F. Wood-Jones (1930). The possibility of grouping Australian natives according to blood tests has been discussed by H. Woollard and J. B. Cleland.

LANGUAGE AND FOLKLORE

The Australian languages have not been thoroughly studied. Research has not yet shown their relationship to any languages outside Australia. Therefore, the evidence of languages agrees with biological facts in suggesting a long separation of the Australian continent from other masses of land. The plants and animals, together with the physique of the aborigines, as well as their customs, products, and speech, all point to an isolated development not influenced by intrusions of a different cultural pattern. There is no agreement of opinion as to the number of distinct languages but numerous dialects have been noted. The general tendency is toward similarities of structure in all the languages, but tribal vocabularies are in some regions so different as to make mutual understanding impossible.

There is no writing, but many tribes employ message sticks, samples of which may be seen in Cases 2 and 3. Although these carved pieces of wood are of different sizes and shapes, and their incised patterns show wide diversity, their functions are similar.

Usually a tribal or other unit is confined to one locality, but sometimes the necessity for travel arises, perhaps to obtain a particular kind of stone for fashioning implements, or to get red ochre, which is used for personal decoration and the rubbing of ornaments and implements. Or it may be that a messenger is sent to call together several tribes in order to hold sacred dances and ceremonies connected with the initiation of boys into tribal life.

When such occasions arise, messengers are provided with these symbolic sticks. The designs engraved on the sticks have not been interpreted; yet we know that a passport of this kind will enable a courier to journey safely in country occupied by tribesmen other than his own. His presence would be resented, and his life would be in danger, if he did not carry credentials.

Gesture language with the hands is widely used as a means of communication between people who speak different dialects. The sign for an opossum is made by holding the fingers in the form of an opossum's foot, and to suggest a small kangaroo a speaker makes the movements of holding the animal's tail. Women, who are under a ban of silence during mourning ceremonies, converse by sign language. Most tribes have few numerals, probably only those for four or five, but despite a paucity of numerals, they have a concept of higher numbers, which are sometimes indicated by tapping parts of the body.

The gradual formation of a sacred language from words of everyday use has been described by C. W. M. Hart with reference to the Tiwi tribes of Melville and Bathurst Islands, North Australia. This sacred language is used only in rites which are of social and religious importance, and many people do not understand its terms. From time to time certain words are eliminated from the everyday language because they resemble the names of dead persons, whose private names, together with words of phonetic resemblance, become taboo for ordinary use, though they remain available for ceremonial purposes.

The sagas of our own ancestors are preserved, not necessarily because we believe them, but on account of their literary and esthetic merit. On the contrary, the folklore and mythology of Australian aborigines are living and energizing factors that enter into the most vital social ceremonies, as, for example, those designed to make plants and animals prolific (W. R. Smith).

Prominent among myths are those of an explanatory kind which satisfy the mind respecting origins of fire, the sun, death, forms of animal life, and peculiar physical phenomena such as rocks of strange shape. Among the Arunta of central Australia, mythology takes the imagination back to the *alcheringa* or "dream times" when creative ancestors roamed the earth. These persons were more than human for they had the power to mold human and

other forms of life, so creating the species seen at the present time. In the southeast of Australia reverence is paid to a supreme being, who under such names as Bunjil, Daramulun, and Baiame, is the creator of all things, the originator of ceremonies, and the most important person mentioned in rites of initiation for boys.

In the southeast portion of the continent are widely distributed beliefs in Mura-muras who were the predecessors and prototypes of the natives, who still believe in the present existence of these mythical persons, concerning whom oral traditions are passed from one generation to another. One legend states that the Mura-mura named Paralina, when out hunting, saw some unformed creatures huddled together. So he smoothed their bodies with his hands, divided their extremities into fingers and toes, then formed mouths, noses, and eyes, and finally placed the ears in position, thus creating man. According to another legend the earth opened in the middle and the animals now regarded as totems or emblems came forth, lay on the sand hills for a time, then separated in all directions.

Near the Murray River in southeast Australia some of the aborigines are divided into Eagle-hawks and Crows, and to account for this organization the tribesmen say that two ancient creators used to be constantly at war. But at last Eagle-hawk and Crow made peace, and decided that in future the Murray blacks should be divided into two phratries called Eagle-hawk and Crow, respectively.

Men forming a remnant of the Urabunna tribe, which at one time occupied wider territory near the northern shore of Lake Eyre, have as a distinguishing mark a number of cuts placed on each side of the spine. This act of cicatrizing is common in Australian tribes. A story which purports to explain the origin of these tribal marks of the Urabunna states that long ago lived two hawks, Wantu and Irritja, each of whom had a tree in which was a nest of hungry fledglings.

Since Wantu was the stronger he compelled Irritja to bring him food, and emphasized the fact that he liked black fellows best of all. For himself the tender-hearted Irritja killed wallabies (small marsupials) but each day he took home for Wantu a human being, though it hurt him to do so.

In sympathy with Irritja was a little hawk named Kutta, who entered into combat with Wantu, the eater of black men. But Kutta was no match for Wantu so he fled to seek the aid of his friend the Bell Bird, who lit a fire at the base of Wantu's tree, killed Wantu himself, and burned his brood. Therefore, out of gratitude for this deliverance, the Urabunna gave themselves tribal marks in imitation of the feathers on the back of the Bell Bird.

Some myths are to be found only in restricted areas, but others, on the contrary, are widely diffused. For example, stories of a rainbow serpent have been reported from all parts of the continent. Usually this serpent, which is of monstrous size, inhabits water-holes, and it is associated with rain and the rainbow.

In Boulia, a district of Queensland, some of the medicine-men obtain their powers from Kanmare, a huge supernatural water-snake with a manelike covering of hair on its head. This creature is able to drown people, and it is further feared because of its power to point the magical bone. This process will be described later when giving an account of practices that are said to cause the death of an enemy. A man at whom the bone has been pointed feels sick and therefore visits a medicine-man who gives him massage, until at last he extracts a bone, stone, or other object said to have been introduced by Kanmare.

Natives of the Pennefather River in northern Queensland regard the rainbow as a brightly colored snake that comes out to stop the rain. These aborigines use the same name for both the snake and the rainbow. On the walls

of a cave in northwest Australia are paintings of rainbow serpents. One pair of snakes is seen in the act of devouring human beings.

If asked whether Australian natives have a religion, the question is difficult to answer, and the reply must depend on our definition of religion, as well as on the particular tribes under consideration, for beliefs and practices vary with locality. Yet it may be said that at least some tribes have what are generally regarded as the elements of religious thought and procedure. For example, many tribes have concepts of creative beings of great power who have ordered the lives of men, forming them and making them dependent on sacrifice, ceremony, and sacred objects in order to preserve life. Not all the hero cults, however, are indigenous to Australia. Donald F. Thomson (1934) describes a hero cult of Cape York that closely resembles one of Torres Strait. This cult, which is probably of Papuan origin, has traveled down both sides of the Cape York Peninsula with the drum and canoe as accompanying traits.

The power of religious and mythological beliefs as energizing factors in social life and magical procedure will be more amply illustrated by studying tribal organization, totemism, the initiation of boys, and the training and functions of medicine-men.

MAGIC

Magical acts, which enter deeply into the thoughts and actions of Australian natives, are particularly associated with the official medicine-men, though many tribal elders and other persons practice magic both publicly and privately.

Among the Arunta of central Australia medicine-men are divided into three classes, having power and social standing which vary with the method of initiation. The most important practitioners are those who were initiated by the *iruntarinia* or spirits. Second in rank are the medicine-men who have derived their power from Oruncha, who is regarded as a mischievous demon. The third and lowest grade of medicine-men owes its power, not to direct contact with the spirits, but to association with practitioners of the higher grades.

A youth who is chosen for initiation must be silent and reserved, given to melancholy, and neurotic in temperament, all of which traits are accentuated by seclusion, starvation, and suggestion. A boy of this kind who desires to become one of the *iruntarinia* class of medicine-men goes secretly by night to a cave said to be inhabited by *iruntarinia* spirits. But he goes no farther than the entrance to the cave, where he sleeps for the night.

Here the spirits launch darts into his body, give him a new set of internal organs, bestow powers of divination, prophecy, and healing, then return him to his tribesmen, among whom he appears dazed and stupid for a few days. While in seclusion a hole is bored in the tongue of the novice. For a year he is not allowed to practice magic, and if during that time the hole made in his tongue has closed, he states that all magical power has left him, and therefore retires from the profession.

Implicit trust is placed in the treatment given to persons who are sick, and in serious cases two or three

medicine-men may be called in for consultation. If the treatment is not effective, the assumption is that powerful counter-magic has been performed.

Usually a patient lies on his back while the medicine-man bends over him and sucks the affected part of the body, pausing now and then to spit out pieces of wood, bone, or stone, which are declared to have been the cause of illness. Frequently the medicine-man decides that an enemy has pointed a sharp bone, and that this has entered the body of the patient. Or the diagnosis may be that an evil spirit has placed in the sufferer's body a sharp stick with an invisible string attached. The jerking of this string by the demon is regarded as the cause of pain.

Observers report that the aborigines make remarkable recovery from severe wounds the cause of which is known, as, for example, injuries from spears and boomerangs. But, on the contrary, a man in sound health may die in a few days if nothing is done to remove a curse that has been placed on him, or if no steps are taken to counteract a magical ceremony that an enemy has performed against him. It is thought necessary to take great care that no person gains possession of nail parings, hair, or a tooth, since these would be powerful adjuncts in working evil magic against their former owner.

Warfare and magic are associated, and among the Arunta a special ceremony is necessary to find out whether the killer of a man is pursued by an avenging spirit in the form of a bird. A woman tests the shields of returned warriors, a simple rite which is carried out by tapping the shields with a club to find whether they give the normal sound. An unusual noise results from striking the shield of a man who is pursued by an avenging spirit, and such a person has to observe many special rites and prohibitions until he is considered safe.

For several days after returning from a foray, all who took part in an expedition that resulted in slaughter of an enemy have to take precautions against the avenging

ghost. All men paint themselves with black, and at night they wear tail-tips of bandicoots, for this animal is nervous and alert. Therefore, it is assumed that those qualities will be given to a sleeper, who will readily waken if a troublesome ghost comes near.

Warfare is often the result of magic which is supposed to have caused a death. A war council is held, and a party of avengers sets out to kill the magician designated by a medicine-man, who by many elaborate proceedings has been able to name the murderer. Warfare is usually of the nature of raids and reprisals in which the slaughter is inconsiderable, but the forays are a cause of great excitement because of their association with dancing and magical ceremonies. The varieties of warfare and their relation to law and the social structure have been explained by W. Lloyd Warner (1931).

Like many primitive people outside Australia, the Australian natives have a system of communal responsibility that sanctions punishment of a brother or some other relative of an offender. Therefore, if an avenging party sets out to make reprisal for murder, the group does not necessarily kill the murderer; on the contrary the elderly, defenseless father of the murderer may be the victim.

Considerable magical belief and ceremony are associated with death and burial. Suppose that a medicine-man has tried all his remedies, including simulated extraction of foreign bodies by sucking, blood-letting, application of splints to broken bones, sucking of a snake bite, and use of the herbs in his pharmacopoeia, according to requirements, yet the patient dies. Immediately a loud wailing takes place and many acts are directed toward placation of the ghost, who must be made to feel that the rites due to him are being enacted in the traditional way. Mourning ceremonies vary with locality, but the following actions are typical of rites connected with death and burial.

Custom has decided who the principal mourners shall be, and when a married man dies his widow, or widows, have to observe carefully the periods and acts which are thought necessary to show respect for the ghost. Widows may be required to whiten themselves with clay from head to foot, to mourn loudly, and to remain isolated in a small shelter of boughs far away from the site where death occurred. In New South Wales widows who were ostracized in this way shaved their heads, then made for themselves caps of white gypsum. A head covering of this kind, which has been built up by daily additions of the material, is shown in Case 4.

A common form of mourning is gashing the body with stone implements. Kinship with the deceased decides who the mourners shall be, and these persons are expected to injure themselves in such a way as to produce permanent scars. Mourners, especially widows, have to observe a ban of silence, but during this time they may communicate by gesture language.

Preparation of the corpse for burial and the disposal of the body are practices which are so variable that they cannot be described in detail, but usually a corpse is bound to prevent wandering of the ghost. Camp is moved from the site of death, and the shelter where death occurred is burned. The Warramunga tribe follows the practice of burying a corpse in a tree, and months later an examination of the burial site and the bones is made in order to determine who was responsible for the death, for death is seldom attributed to natural causes, but rather to the working of magic by an enemy.

Tracks of an animal situated near the burial tree are thought to indicate the totem to which the murderer belonged, then other rites determine the guilty person, and an avenging party is organized to kill the murderer or one of his relatives. After a year of mourning the spirit answers questions, and states that the mourning period is now ended.

The custom of cooking and eating the dead is observed by the Binbinga, living near the west shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The body is cooked in an earthen oven heated with stones that have been baked in a fire, and the heat is retained by covering the corpse with sheets of bark. After the flesh has been consumed the bones are returned to relatives who decorate and bury them. In some parts of New South Wales and Victoria corpses are disposed of by burning, but in north Victoria burial is usual, and over the site of the interment a small hut is erected.

Opinions of different tribes disagree respecting the fate of the soul, though a belief in the haunting presence of a jealous ghost is general. When asked what happens to a spirit on completion of the temporary period of hovering near the site of death and burial, the aborigines make various replies. Some say that ghosts travel west where they disappear into a deep chasm; others state that ghosts assemble on a remote island; or again, ghosts go to the sky. Another commonly accepted belief is that the dead can appear in dreams of the living.

Faith in reincarnation is widely spread, and sometimes these beliefs are closely associated with the social organization of the tribe. It may be thought, for instance, that a reincarnated spirit changes its sex and totem at rebirth. Thus, a man belonging to the frog totem may be reborn as a female of the kangaroo totem. The Arunta hold the belief that certain lonely places are inhabited by little spirit children, who have the power to enter into females who visit the spot, so making them pregnant.

Magical beliefs and practices are made to center in certain objects of a simple nature. Great magical power is sometimes attributed to small stones of quartz, especially that which is translucent. When a medicine-man is initiated his body becomes charged with these magical stones (Case 2) which may be used for several purposes. A medicine-man can remove these crystals from his body to throw at a comet in order to drive it

away, or he may communicate his power to a youth by rubbing the body of the novice with his own crystals. Stones may be projected into an enemy, who then seeks his magician to have them removed by sucking, in the way previously described.

The Kaitish, Warramunga, and other northern tribes believe in a kind of evil magic which is associated with small stones that are traded far away from the place of their origin, each stone being wrapped in bark. The owner of such a stone, when wishing to injure an enemy, scrapes off a little of the powder from the crystal, then drops this dust on his sleeping victim. If this act is followed by burning the bark in which the stone was wrapped, success is thought to be assured.

Shoes made from emu feathers (Cases 2-5) may be used merely to protect the wearer's feet from the hot sand, but they have also a magical significance. A medicine-man may use shoes of this kind when tracking a victim from whom he wishes to extract kidney fat for use in magical rites. The shoes are rounded at both ends, and their use makes detection of the murderer difficult, especially if he carries some magical stones which make him invisible.

Pointing sticks and bones (Case 2), though simple in construction, are thought to be potent in compassing the death of an enemy at whom they are secretly pointed, and against whom are muttered appropriate spells, such as "May your heart burst, and may your ribs be torn asunder." At the blunt end of the pointing stick is a small ball of resin to which a few human hairs are attached. If these hairs are burnt after the pointing ceremony is ended, death of the victim follows (G. Róheim, 1925).

Important sacred objects are *churinga* (Plate VII), a word which can be used as an adjective or a noun. Thus, an article may be a *churinga* or a sacred thing, or the object may be said to be *churinga*, that is, sacred.

Examples of *churinga* are shown in each of the cases (Hall A1) and variation of form with locality is evident. Simple as these objects of wood and stone may be, they are revered possessions. No woman, child, or uninitiated boy is allowed to visit the hiding place of these sacred things, which are concealed by elders of the tribes. These privileged persons bring out the objects for use on sacred occasions such as tribal initiations, rites for making rain, and ceremonies designed to increase the food supply. Examination of *churinga* shows that various designs, including circles and spirals, are used for decoration, and investigation has proved that each of these designs has a specific meaning. Each totem, that is, each group of people having a particular animal or object as an emblem, has its own symbolical design and its own *churinga*. For example, the white lines which are painted on the *churinga* of the frog totem represent frogs and the trees in whose crevices they shelter.

Some of the *churinga* are perforated for the attachment of a cord. *Churinga* of this kind are named bull-roarers because of the noise the instruments make when whirled rapidly round the head (Plate I, Fig. 11). In Australian tribes the noise is a warning to women and uninitiated boys to keep away from the site where sacred ceremonies are being held. Before their initiation, boys are taught that the noise made by a bull-roarer, or buzzer, is the voice of a being who is more than human. For example, some southwestern tribes refer to the noise of the bull-roarer as the voice of Daramulun. But initiated boys are told of the real origin of the buzzing.

In concluding the account of magical beliefs and practices, symbolical ceremonies for causing rainfall should be mentioned. Cutting the bodies of medicine-men and allowing the blood to flow on those seated round, or taking blood from old men of the tribe for the same purpose, are ordinary features of rain-making rites. The blood is a symbol of rain, and the white feathers which

are thrown into the air are symbolical of clouds. In the southeast such ceremonies are an appeal to powerful spirits, the Mura-muras, who are thought to be invoked by these rites.

SOCIAL LIFE

We must not imagine that the Australians are loosely banded together solely for the purposes of food gathering and self protection. On the contrary they have a social organization which is extremely complex. Unwritten tribal laws regulate marriage, the use of hunting territory (D. S. Davidson, 1928a), and the observance of such public functions as totem ceremonies and rites for initiating boys into the tribe.

At the base of the social life is the family (B. Malinowski, 1913), which consists of a man and his wife or wives, together with the young children who are dependent on them for food and protection. The union of a man and his wife is of a permanent kind regulated by laws pertaining to adultery and divorce. Thus family life has a legal aspect, and in addition to this the economic conditions within the family are important. Men are responsible for hunting, warfare, legal administration, and sacred ceremonies, while women build shelters, gather vegetable food, carry water, and provide firewood. Females are also engaged in making netting bags and baskets in localities where these articles are used.

Family life implies definite social obligations relating to provision of food, blood revenge in case of murder, and duties connected with mourning. Terms of relationship are not mere forms of address, and each word expressing kinship carries a concept of certain rights and duties. The classificatory system of relations is in use, that is to say, one word may be used to denote a group of relations who in our own social system would be designated each by a specific name. Thus in the Yarlalde tribe of Western Australia the word *maiyo* means my father's father, my father's father's brothers and sisters, and several other relatives of that generation. *Bakano* is a term used to designate a mother's mother and her

brothers and sisters (A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1913, 1918, 1923; and W. L. Warner, 1933).

Almost everywhere among Australian tribes a child has to regard his mother's oldest brother as a most important member of the family, especially with regard to discipline and responsibility for conduct. The levirate is probably followed by all Australian tribes. By this custom, when a man dies, his wife or wives pass to his brother, in some tribes only to the deceased's younger brother. Death tends to break down the social structure but restoration is made in this way.

Another means of keeping a social equilibrium is the exchange of sisters in marriage. Each group which is concerned in the marriage bargain gains and loses a female. And it should be remembered that in primitive society the concept of a woman as a child-bearer, who adds to the strength of the group, is important.

The Australian concept of kinship imposes rules of marriage, and an infraction of these is punishable by death because the delinquents are regarded as incestuous. The details of organization are too varied and too complicated to be described here, but a paragraph will suffice to show the complexity of the social structure.

Larger than the family unit is the horde, which consists of a number of families who cooperate in hunting and sharing food. The horde is a land-owning group with definite rights over water supplies and all food, animal and vegetable, within that area. A horde is usually independent and autonomous, having its own elders and council. A child belongs to the horde of its father, and descent is reckoned in the male line.

The word "tribe" has been used with various connotations by different writers. Perhaps a tribe is most satisfactorily defined as an aggregate of persons who speak what they themselves regard as one language, the name of the tribe and the name of the language being generally one and the same. According to locality, a

tribe may be divided into two, four, or eight divisions, and each of these may be sub-divided into units known as totemic clans, each having a plant or animal as its emblem or totem. The members of a totem regard themselves as united by a strong bond, for all are descended from ancient totemic ancestors; all are of "one blood."

Usually a person has to marry outside his (or her) own totem group, and probably outside his (or her) sub-tribal division as well. Thus, if a tribe has two main divisions called, for example, Eagle-hawk and Crow respectively, a person from the Eagle-hawk division is obliged to choose a spouse from the Crow division, and conversely.

Moreover, in each of the two primary divisions are several totem groups, and it may be a rule that a man of the wild dog totem of the Eagle-hawks is permitted to marry only a woman of the frog totem of the Crow division. The choice of a spouse is still further limited by the concept of kinship and incest previously mentioned. Marrying outside a group is known as exogamy.

Compulsory avoidances of certain relatives, not only in marriage but in ordinary social intercourse and even in conversation, are imposed in most tribes. For example, a man is usually compelled to avoid his mother-in-law. The possible explanations, psychological and otherwise, that might account for this practice, which is common among many primitive peoples, have been discussed by Professor R. H. Lowie in "Primitive Society."

The social functions of Australian tribes have been described by A. P. Elkin (1932a), who makes clear the main beliefs connected with the institutions of totemism and initiation. Totemism has historical, economic, religious, and social aspects. The members of the totem revere their totemic ancestors, and the ceremonies are in part concerned with a symbolic representation of the actions of these progenitors when on earth. The members of a totem are responsible for rites which increase the

supply of the totem animal. For instance, men of a kangaroo totem may have to avoid eating flesh of the kangaroo, yet they are responsible for rites which are thought to aid the fecundity of kangaroos in a magical way. Such ritual provides food for persons who are not of the kangaroo totem, and they in return carry out the rites for encouraging the reproduction of their own totem animals.

The social importance of totemism in regulating choice in marriage has been mentioned, and for fuller descriptions of the beliefs and practices involved in totemism the articles of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, and A. A. Goldenweiser should be consulted. A. van Gennep and E. Durkheim show the importance of mythology and cult heroes in the social and religious life, and many of these superior beings are intimately connected with totemism.

Clearly, therefore, all aspects of tribal life are connected; and, primitive as the culture may seem to be when judged by inspection of the objects displayed, the aborigines have a complex philosophy and an elaborate social mechanism.

Children grow up with great freedom; parental affection is undeniable, and instances of infanticide should not be regarded as an indication of innate cruelty, but rather as an occasional concession to a harsh environment. Children are not weaned until late, possibly in the fourth year. Infants are carried astride the mother's hip, or in an opossum skin pouch on the back. Perhaps as early as the age of seven, boys live in the bachelor's camp, where they associate with men, play games imitative of manly occupations, and begin to get their first inkling of the mysteries into which they will later be initiated. Girls, when very young, share the tasks of older females whom they accompany in foraging expeditions for digging up wild produce with sharpened sticks. Cat's cradle is a favorite game in some tribes and many of the figures are complicated. The whit-

whit, a toy for boys, is shown in Case 4. The implement consists of a conical wooden head with a long thin wooden tail. Usually the toy is thrown so that it first strikes the top of a bush or a small hillock; after this contact it ricochets for a long distance (W. E. Roth). For girls there are no formal rites of initiation into the tribe, and without instruction they gradually fit themselves for married life, but boys have to suffer an ordeal of physical endurance.

Initiation of boys involves seclusion with their tutors and old men, who bring out the sacred *churinga* and explain to the boys the legends and mythology associated with these objects, which are generally carved and painted slabs of wood, examples of which may be seen in each of the cases.

The ordeals which a boy has to suffer vary according to locality, but circumcision or some more drastic operation of like kind is always practiced. Knocking out the front teeth is a common rite; so also is scarifying the body with a sharp stone, thus forming ridges which are prominent through life. Lopping off finger joints is a custom associated with initiation, and in certain localities the septum of the nose is pierced to admit an ornamental bone (Case 3). The geographical distribution of these initiation practices has been discussed by D. S. Davidson (1928).

After enduring these tests and receiving instruction in the marriage laws and magical practices of the tribe each boy may receive a new name as a symbol of his social rebirth. He was a child; but now he has graduated as a man with new privileges and obligations; therefore it is fitting that he should have a new name.

Not only has the boy proved himself physically capable, perhaps by some feat of hunting, such as climbing and catching an opossum, but he has, in addition, been examined in tribal law. He has learned respect for the tribal elders and understands his duty toward

them. The nature of public justice has been explained, and the boy will be able to see for himself the way in which an adulterer or other offender has to stand up to defend himself against missile weapons discharged by aggrieved relatives. The youth knows, not only this kind of public justice, but the operation of private justice, whereby revenge is taken by magical or other means. After discharge from the initiation camp the boy will soon be free to marry in obedience to the kinship and exogamic rules of his tribe.

The assumption of a new name is perhaps more significant than is at first evident. In fact the whole subject of naming, though not well understood for all tribes, is known to be complicated and socially important, as C. W. M. Hart has explained. To use the names of the dead is taboo, since this will call up their ghosts, and to address a youth by the name used before his initiation is an insult, for use of the word implies that the initiated youth is still a child. All this social usage, and much more, is now part of the mental equipment of the initiated boy, who by sacred rites has become affiliated with the various groups (tribe, totemic clan, horde, and family) to each of which he owes allegiance.

Although the Australian aborigines have no musical instruments and accompany their songs and dances only with rhythmical beating on an opossum skin, or by clashing two boomerangs, they have songs and corroboree dances for every special occasion. Some of the vocal music of Central and South Australia has been recorded and analyzed by E. H. Davies, Professor of Music in Adelaide University, who states that the natives have a well-developed sense of pitch which is sustained with accuracy, and readily recovered after a change has been made.

The scale is pentatonic with falling cadences, and the octave is accurately used. Davies mentions "Snake Songs" a "Possum Song" and love songs, which are

accompanied by a "rhythmic intoxication of the vigorous clashing of boomerangs." With Australian aborigines, as with most primitive people, singing and dancing are more than pastimes; they are social exercises which are intimately bound up with sacred beliefs and ceremonies that are essential to tribal unity.

ORNAMENTS, WEAPONS, AND IMPLEMENTS

In viewing the exhibits we are at once impressed with the uniformity of Australian culture, but it is apparent that spears, spear-throwers, boomerangs, shields, and clubs have specific local forms, and the same may be said of personal ornaments. Each tribe and smaller group has its own territory, and wanderings and encroachments are discouraged. Therefore, the natural tendency is toward the preservation of local types of weapons and other objects which are characteristic of definite areas, though in some instances objects are traded far from their places of origin (W. D. Hambly, 1931).

Some influence of Malay traders and contacts with New Guinea must be recognized so far as the north coast of Australia is concerned (W. L. Warner, 1932). Drums, shell trumpets, and bows and arrows are likely to have originated in New Guinea. The Malays gave the idea of a dugout canoe and an outrigger (Plate III), also the use of a mast and a sail made of Pandanus fiber. The Malays introduced a form of tobacco-pipe.

Yet, generally speaking, Australia has an indigenous culture with local developments, and foreign elements are not numerous.

Three main areas may be distinguished: (1) the south, west, and center of the continent; (2) the northwest and the north; and (3) the east and southeast. So far as possible the objects have been arranged in this cultural grouping, but it has been necessary to make some modifications.

Personal ornaments are of a simple kind, including neck-bands, arm-bands, girdles, forehead bands, and pubic coverings. The substances used are shreds of bark, fur of the opossum, shells, feathers, brightly colored seeds, and human hair. Almost invariably, red ochre is employed for smearing these decorations. Sometimes the hair cut from a dead man is made into a girdle with

which the spirit of the owner is thought to be associated. Such a girdle may be passed round among men who rub their thighs with it, so that the good qualities of the dead man may pass into them. The act also symbolizes the unity of men who perform this ceremony. Hair girdles with shell ornaments attached for covering the pubes are shown in Plate I, Figs. 1-3, and Case 2. These coverings, which are worn by men of northwestern Australia, are ornamented with incised geometrical patterns into which red ochre has been rubbed.

Although bodily decoration and the engraving of wooden implements show artistic conception to be of the simplest kind, other forms of art are more elaborate. Days and even weeks are spent in preparing the ground for totemic ceremonies. Elaborate drawings are made to symbolize totem animals and totemic ancestors, and the performers themselves are decorated with painted designs and patterns made by applying feathers to parts of the body which are moistened with human blood. The sacred objects themselves are embellished in this way, and in Case 5 is an excellent replica of a totem pole which has been decorated with pink, downy feathers.

The Rainbow Snake concept is widely distributed, and in connection with this story cave drawings are abundant in northwest Australia. But this is only one instance of mural art which can be studied in detail from the numerous plates accompanying H. Basedow's article (1914). The art is crude, and the ethnological interest lies in the symbolism, which is not well understood.

Owing to the great size of Australia, the proximity of some tribes to the sea or rivers, and the remoteness of other tribes from water, no general statements can be made respecting the nature of the food supply, except that agriculture is not practiced, and that in each locality the greatest ingenuity is shown in taking advantage of what is available, no matter how meagre this may be.

Among the large animals which are hunted, the kangaroo, the emu, and the opossum are important. Kangaroos can be run down in open chase, or they may be scared by firing grass and driving them into nets. In pursuit of the opossum, hunters climb trees by cutting toe holds with their stone axes; meanwhile they support themselves with a fiber rope, or merely by clasping their hands round the tree, and with such an arrangement they mount with great rapidity.

Collecting is, on the whole, even more important than hunting, and no creature—grub, insect, reptile, or amphibian—is too insignificant for the larder. It is in collecting food that tribesmen show their greatest ingenuity, for they live comfortably where a stranger would starve. Digging in the dry ground may yield a supply of honey ants whose bodies are charged with a sweet, nutritious substance. Removal of the bark of trees leads to the discovery of succulent cocoons, and excavation in the mud of dry watercourses produces food in the form of frogs, whose bodies are charged with water on which the creatures are subsisting during hibernation. Near the sea-coast shell-fish are collected, and the sands of the north coast are inspected for signs of a cache of turtle's eggs.

Women who are provided with digging sticks scour the country for every form of edible fruit and root, and seasonal migrations are made to districts where a harvest is to be gathered. Seeds are ground between stones either by crushing or pounding in the manner illustrated in Case 2. Nets and baskets of vegetable fiber are made locally. Some excellent examples of this work are shown in Cases 4 and 5. In Case 5 are wooden *pitchis* (bowls) which women use for carrying water and produce. Fishing is practiced locally. In Case 3 may be seen examples of fish-hooks made of tortoise-shell.

Fire is made by one of two principal methods. A long slender stick of hard wood is twirled on a baseboard of softer wood (see Case 3), or a wooden shield may be

vigorously rubbed with a piece of wood, until the friction produces ignition of tinder placed close to the groove which is rubbed. In Case 5 is a shield marked with grooves resulting from the fire-making process.

Since the Australians make no pottery, cooking is done chiefly by a process of baking on hot embers. In some localities an earthen oven is used; that is to say, the meat is placed in a hole lined with hot stones, and a covering of earth confines the heat.

In connection with food supply the subject of navigation is important. The simplest form of propulsion through the water is by means of a log, which is propelled and guided by the hands and feet of the man who lies on it. Of local distribution are the dugout canoe formed by hollowing a log, and the bark canoe formed by sewing the ends of a large piece of bark which has been removed from a tree in cylindrical form. On the northeast coast examples of outrigger canoes are seen (Plate III). The outrigger is formed by adding a lateral framework to the dugout canoe in order to give it greater stability. The subject of navigation has been comprehensively dealt with by N. W. Thomas (1905), and D. S. Davidson (1935).

The nature of the food supply and the methods of obtaining it are characteristic of hunting communities, whose members are dependent on seasonal conditions, especially rainfall, which in many areas of Australia is scanty and irregular. Sometimes hunting communities find themselves eating to repletion, or they may border on starvation for weeks or months. To stave off hunger pangs, bark belts are tightened, and the leaves of the Pitcheri plant (*Duboisia hopwoodii*) are chewed (Case 4). The leaves of the plant are packed into bags and traded for hundreds of miles from central Australia into Queensland and New South Wales. For chewing purposes the leaves of the Pitcheri plant are mixed with ashes obtained by burning leaves of acacia. A chewed plug of Pitcheri is carried behind the ear and offered as a friendly greeting.

The stem and leaves of a tobacco plant (*Nicotiana suaveolens*), which grows wild in central Australia, are chewed by the Arunta. The question of indigenous use of tobacco in Australia (apart from European influence) has been discussed by A. B. Lewis (1931).

Metals are not used; we are dealing with a stone age people who rely on the use of stone, bone, wood, sinews for binding, shell, and gums for fixing the objects in position. The principal objects made of stone are spearheads, axes, gouges, long knives in sheaths, and scrapers for dressing skins. The spearheads are slender, leaf-shaped, sharply pointed, and serrated round the edge with fine indentations. These small notches are made by pressure with a piece of bone. The best examples of this kind are to be seen in Case 1, where a series of spearheads made from European bottle glass is displayed. These blades were made by natives of Kimberley in northwest Australia, who fasten the spear-points to the wooden shafts with masses of resin.

Stone axes (Case 3) are hafted by binding the head in a pliable piece of wood which is bent round the stone head, lashed in position with kangaroo sinew, and further secured with a mass of resin (Plate I, Fig. 5). Gouges (Cases 2 and 5) are made by fixing flaked stones at the ends of wooden handles. A gouge of this type is used for making deep grooves on boomerangs and other weapons. The wooden *pitchis* used by the Warramunga and other tribes are also grooved in this way (Case 5). Excellent examples of flaking stone to form long slender knives are to be seen among exhibits from the Arunta (Arandja) tribe, and other natives to the north of these people (Case 5).

Case 4 contains a series of objects illustrating the manufacture of a bone implement from rough splinters of kangaroo bone. The slivers are rubbed until they take the form of smooth bone awls for piercing skins. Shells may be used as scrapers, but sometimes they are fixed to wooden handles to make spoons and scoops (Case 2).

The most essential objects are manufactured from hard wood, which is shaped and grooved with tools of stone and shell. The principal articles of wood are spears and spear-throwers, clubs, boomerangs, and shields (Plates IV, VIII–XII).

The most elaborate spears, made entirely of wood and provided with elaborately carved barbs, are manufactured by natives of Ashburton in the northwest of the continent. Excellent examples of this carving are to be seen in Case 1, and a series is illustrated in Plate VIII.

Shields are of two main types if regarded functionally. Thick narrow shields which are used at close quarters for warding off blows from clubs are displayed in Case 4. Broad shields for intercepting such missile weapons as boomerangs and spears are shown in Case 3. An inspection of the cases will illustrate the way in which special forms of these shields have become characteristic of particular localities. For example, the broad painted shields of Queensland (Case 3) are so distinctive that they could not be mistaken for the shields from any other area. The various types of shields used in Western Australia are illustrated in Plate IX and are displayed in Case 1. Though similarities may be noted, differences are apparent, and such western areas as Broome, Ashburton, Gascoyne, and Mount Margaret has each its own peculiar type of shield (W. D. Hambly, 1931).

Spear-throwers vary in pattern (Plate X) and many local types have been evolved. Yet the principle of use is the same, and the usual method of holding is illustrated in Plate XI. The object of the spear-thrower is to give greater range and precision. The spear-thrower follows the forward movement of the thrower's arm and so extends the time of his control over the flight of the weapon.

Usually a spear-thrower has a flat surface on which the shaft of the spear may rest, though an exception is to be noted in the rounded spear-throwers from the Mara and Anula tribes living near the Gulf of Carpentaria. At

the rear end of the spear-thrower is a peg of wood, or possibly the tooth of a kangaroo, fixed in position by binding with sinew and resin. Inspection of the butts of spears shows that most of them are slightly hollowed at the butt for the reception of this peg. The body of the spear-thrower is often narrowed to form a hand-grip, and a secure hold is aided by the addition of a lump of resin to the part held in the hand.

Boomerangs (Cases 1, 3, and 5) vary considerably in size and shape. The returning boomerangs, which are used chiefly for amusement, are twisted; that is to say, the body of the object lies in two planes, a fact which is easily demonstrated by placing the eye at one end of the boomerang. This returning weapon is launched vigorously but smoothly against the wind (Plate XII). The flight shows a rotary movement, an apparent collapse after the weapon has turned in the air and is advancing toward the thrower, and finally a recovery as the implement rises once more and returns to the point from which it was launched. Boomerangs of the non-returning type are quite flat. They vary in curvature; some are sharply bent, almost forming a letter V, while others have a very slight curvature. The edges are usually sharp, so adding to the efficacy of the weapon.

Hard wooden clubs (Case 4) are of many shapes. They may be used as missile weapons or in single combat at close quarters.

In summarizing, it may be said that the culture of the Australian aborigines shows a contrast of simplicity and complexity. Social organization, the kinship system, totemistic ideas, and public rites connected with initiation and magic express abstruse ideas.

On the contrary the economic organization is rudimentary. Clothing, permanent dwellings, agriculture, and domestic animals, with the exception of the dingo or native dog, are absent. Metals are not used, and the aborigines are still a stone age people. Except in a limited

northeastern area the bow and arrow are unknown. No pottery is made, and musical instruments are absent.

The material culture is of a rudimentary kind, but so far as the scanty evidence goes, Australian culture is not so elementary as that of the extinct Tasmanians.

TASMANIA

The island of Tasmania is situated to the southeast of Australia, from which it is separated by Bass Strait, which is 120 miles wide. The area is 26,000 square miles, which is a little more than twice the size of Maryland, and the greatest length of the island is 230 miles. The formation of Tasmania indicates that the island was at one time a continuation of the southeastern plateau of Australia. The time of cleavage from the mainland is unknown, but probably this was not geologically ancient.

The general structure is that of a tableland, varying in height from two to three thousand feet, with numerous ranges of hills. The climate is warm temperate, and owing to proximity of the sea the range of temperature is only about 20° from winter to summer. But allowance must be made for effects of elevation on temperature; snow lies on the higher mountains for several months of the year.

Vegetable life includes many species of large trees which produce gums and resins, and in parts a luxuriant grass has encouraged sheep breeding. Animal life is of an ancient marsupial type showing correspondence with the fauna of Australia. Among the typical animals are kangaroos, wombats, duck-bills, kangaroo rats, opossums, and the Tasmanian devil.

The island was discovered by Tasman in the year 1642, and as a compliment to the Governor of the East Indies he named his new discovery Van Diemen's Land, a title which was not changed until the year 1853. From 1803 to that time Tasmania was used as a settlement for convicts who were transported from England, often for offenses of a trivial kind, and in the early development of the island we have to note turbulent conditions.

This unrest was characterized by intermittent warfare between peaceful settlers, gangs of escaped convicts, and wandering bands of aborigines. The natives were never systematically studied; on the contrary, they were per-

secuted, until finally in the period 1831-36 about 203 survivors were collected and transferred to a reserve on Flinders Island.

Removed from their natural environment and hunting occupations, the aborigines showed a rapid decrease which was aided by access to alcohol, intermittent use of clothing, and diseases introduced by contact with white men. Racial miscegenation took place, with the result that a European-Tasmanian half-breed population was created, and by the year 1876 the Tasmanian race became extinct with the death of a woman named Truganini, the last of pure Tasmanian stock.

This introduction indicates that only scanty information is available respecting the social life, religious beliefs, language, and customs of Tasmanians. The data available were collected in a desultory way by the more intelligent settlers, and years later attempts at compilation were made from notes which often indicate conflicting opinions and inadequate observation. Yet it is known that the Tasmanians preserved in their remote island a living record of a simple hunting life of the pattern which was followed by men of the old stone age in Europe perhaps 100,000 years ago.

Before describing the few objects of Tasmanian culture which are preservable in a museum it will be well to outline the facts that are known concerning the physique, language, and beliefs of the Tasmanians.

Physically, the Tasmanians did not show close correspondence with any other living race, and the suggestion has been made that the peculiar physical type developed as a result of long isolation. Segregation in Tasmania would also account for the lack of cultural development, which remained on the most elementary level yet known. The stimulation arising from contacts, even if those are of a hostile kind, is usually effective in enriching cultural traits, but this incentive the Tasmanians never had.

A consensus favors the view that the Tasmanians were a branch of Melanesian Negro stock, the Negro characters being shown in the breadth of the nose, the dark skin color, the thick projecting lips, and the tufted hair, which some observers describe as woolly, while others speak of it as frizzly. Tasmanians show some physical correspondence with the Andamanese, also with the Semang of the Malay Peninsula, and the general deduction is one which regards Tasmanians as a southern migration of an early Negroid stock, which probably made its way down the east side of Australia.

Fortunately, some skeletons of Tasmanians have been preserved for study, but although seventy skulls are available only six complete skeletons are known, and recent research indicates the doubtful provenance of some skulls which have been regarded as Tasmanian (J. Wunderly; F. Wood-Jones, 1934a). The skull capacity is small, but this does not necessarily imply a low intelligence, since bodily weight and the size of the brain are closely correlated, because a large part of the brain is concerned with motor functions. Skeletal measurements, but admittedly on an unreliable number of subjects, give the average height of male skeletons as five feet six inches, and for females four feet nine inches. Yet, even with due regard to the small size of the bodies, skull capacities are low compared with those of Europeans.

Evidence respecting language is uncertain. Robert Clark, who was in charge of the settlement of Tasmanians in Flinders Island, speaks of eight or ten different languages or dialects, and there is need to take warning against the assumption of simple languages merely because the general culture was of an elementary kind. At the time when notes were made with regard to Tasmanian languages, such studies were carried out by collecting vocabularies in different parts of the island (F. Wood-Jones, 1934). The recorders lacked a system of phonetics which would have made their results comparable.

Owing to the separation of Tasmanians in isolated bands throughout rugged country, dialects would no doubt be formed; these probably belonged to one language, which with timely study might have been shown as a part of some still extant Melanesian speech. The Tasmanians are said to have formed many of their words in imitation of sounds such as noises made by birds and other animals, the sound of wind, or the crackling of a fire.

They are said to have possessed few generic words; for example, they had no word for tree, but many words to describe different kinds of trees. The statement that one word might have a variety of disparate meanings suggests the possibility of tones being used to denote which of these meanings was to be accepted, but on this point evidence is inconclusive.

Of social organization and religion almost nothing is certain except that the roving bands were small in numbers, and that a family of father, mother, and children was known. Of leadership there was no evidence. Some kind of moon cult has been suggested, and though answers given to the catechist on Flinders Island imply a belief in continued existence of disembodied spirits, the evidence is meagre and unreliable.

Observers agree that the Tasmanians eked out their language with a wealth of gesture, and that they were highly emotional and fearful—probably with ample reason; also that they were cunning and treacherous, attributes which were indispensable if they intended to preserve themselves against superior intruders. Unscientific observation states that the Tasmanians could count only up to five, after which they spoke of a number as “plenty.” Time is said to have been indicated by the position of the sun, and the passage of days was mentioned by pointing to the sky and indicating how many times the sun had appeared to pass across.

No doubt exists with regard to their ability to sing and dance, for corroborees were frequent and prolonged to the

point of complete exhaustion. The only musical instrument was an improvised drum made by stretching an opossum skin between the knees and striking it with a stick. One of the most frequent games was dodging spears, a useful accomplishment in later life, since an offender had to stand up for punishment in this way.

The most important item in personal equipment was red ochre, which with grease was freely used on the body and hair, and for coating such ornaments as neck-bands made from sinews of the kangaroo. Bodies were cicatrized with simple cuts into which earth was rubbed to raise the incisions. No clothing, with the exception of an opossum or kangaroo skin, was worn.

Shelters were simple bark screens which could be turned against the wind, and at death burial was made under a small bark structure not unlike the one used during life. But of observances connected with death and burial nothing is known; neither is the presence of medicine-men, who function in many primitive tribes, reported among the Tasmanians. One writer mentions that calcined bones were found inside structures erected over human remains, and the binding of arms and legs of a corpse has been noted, but none of the data can justify generalizations.

References may be found to native methods of cutting the body to relieve pain, of burning a wound caused by snake-bite, and of carrying the skull or bones of a dead relative to ward off evil. No organized warfare existed, but rival bands exchanged showers of stones and spears.

The Tasmanians provide a picture of the simplest form of community, which is able to exist solely by hunting, collecting, and fishing. It is certain that these aborigines had no agriculture and no domestic animals, not even the dingo which is so common in Australia, until the animal was introduced from the mainland. Attending to the food supply consumed the whole time of men, women, and children, and of the presence of the fine arts, pictorial

and graphic, little evidence exists, though A. L. Meston has described some aboriginal rock-carvings in Tasmania.

If an attempt is made to enumerate the possessions of Tasmanians, only a short list of objects can be prepared, and many of these were of a perishable kind. Reference has been made to neck-bands of kangaroo sinew rubbed with red ochre, and in addition to these the natives wore arm-bands and anklets of opossum fur. Flowers and bright berries were also decoratively employed. A favorite ornament consisted of several loops of small, bright blue shells (*Elenchus*), which were pierced by biting and then threaded on a sinew of kangaroo. The dull outer coat of the shells was removed by smoking them in smouldering grass; then they were rubbed with penguin oil (Case 4).

Tasmanians were observed to make fire by twirling a stick of hard wood on soft bark, but to save frequent repetition of this process they sometimes carried fire in clay receptacles. They neither made nor owned pottery, so cooking was done on an open fire; then the cooked meat would be cut up with stone implements.

Examination of kitchen middens, refuse consisting of shells, has indicated that the Tasmanians had a varied diet. As expert hunters and trackers they caught kangaroos, sometimes by firing the grass and spearing the animals which ran out. Wallabies, kangaroo rats, wombats, opossums, and birds were ordinary items of diet. Eggs were gathered for food, and the flesh of snakes was appreciated. Vegetable foods included fern roots, fungi, and, near the coast, seaweeds.

Coastal bands learned the value of marine foods, and to aid in securing these, bark rafts were used. These rafts were propelled with bark paddles or broad sticks, and in shallow water they were poled along. Fish were speared, but the use of fish as food seems to have been only local. At one end of the raft a fire was kept burning on a stone slab or a bed of earth. Men were at times observed crossing rivers and creeks on small logs.

Women living near the coast are reported to have been expert in diving for haliotis shells, which they brought up in baskets from beneath the water. Limpets were gathered and thrown on a fire, then the contents were removed with pointed sticks.

In climbing trees the men were particularly adept, for they could mount quickly by cutting toe-holds with a stone and supporting themselves with a sling made from twisted kangaroo sinews. In this manner the capture of an opossum was made. Among some tribes of southeast Australia this performance was one of the tests for manhood which boys had to undertake during tribal initiation. Tasmanian youths possibly had the fortitude to pass such tests, but we do not know that they had initiation ceremonies of any kind.

The implements of the Tasmanians were remarkably few, and these were of the simplest kind. They lacked the boomerang, the shield, and the spear-thrower, which are so widely distributed in Australia, and though some observers noted wooden shields these are said to have been introduced at a late date from southeast Australia. Barbed spears and hafted stone axes, when used locally by Tasmanians, are likewise thought to have resulted from contact with Australia through Europeans who travelled to and fro between Tasmania and the mainland. Furthermore, Australian aborigines from New South Wales were brought as laborers to Tasmania.

The Tasmanian spear was a long piece of wood without barbs or ornament, but one end was sharpened by charring it in the fire and scraping with a stone implement. The shaft was straightened by warming and manipulating between the teeth. The aborigines are reported to have been skilled in trailing spears on the ground between their toes, so that they appeared unarmed. Yet the weapon could be rapidly transferred to the hand and launched.

The waddy, or club, was a straight piece of wood having a handgrip made by grooving a portion with a

stone gouge. The length of the club was two feet three inches, and the thickness tapered from one and three-quarter inches to about half an inch less at the narrow end. The waddy could be thrown with great precision and a twisting motion.

Like the Australian aborigines, the Tasmanians were a stone-age people having absolutely no knowledge of metals. Even the stone implements were of a simple kind comparable in form to those known to have been used in the Mousterian period, an early division of the palaeolithic or old stone age in Europe.

Many implements, which were chiefly of chert, sandstone, or quartzite, were struck off from a core with a stone hammer. Then, leaving one side plain, the worker removed a few rough flakes to give an edge, which was sometimes worked by small flaking; yet the stone tools were never polished. The use of bone implements by the Tasmanians has been alleged and again denied; there does not appear to be good reason for thinking that bone implements were used for removing small flakes from the edges of stone tools.

Stone implements varied in size from 5x2 inches, to small round forms about one inch in diameter (E. B. Tylor, 1893, 1894). Such names as hand-ax, side scraper, double-sided scraper, and gouge have been used to designate various forms whose uses were skinning, scraping fat from skins, cutting meat, gouging grooves, making notches for climbing trees, and trimming the points of spears. Sharp stones were also used for making body scars either as a cure for pain or as a form of personal ornament.

Field Museum collection (W. D. Hambly, 1931a) includes stone implements from Tasmania (Case 4) but no other objects from these primitive people. Yet a good idea of their simple basketry, straight spears, and clubs may be obtained by reference to cases displaying comparable objects made by Australian aborigines.

To assume that a people of elementary hunting culture are rudimentary in all their thoughts is hazardous, as consideration of Australian aborigines has proved. In Australia an elementary stone-age culture was noted, but the kinship system and totemic rites, together with initiation ceremonies, are known to be elaborate and complex (G. Róheim, 1925a; D. Porteus). Therefore, the fact that the Tasmanians had so few material possessions does not warrant an assumption of mental vacuity. But, so far as the evidence goes, Tasmanians provide the simplest form of human life which has yet been studied.

An early settler (1818) describes the Tasmanian aborigines at work in their stone pits. He reports that, while chattering noisily, the blacks were breaking stones into fragments either by dashing them on the rocks or by striking them with other stones. They then picked up the sharp-edged pieces for use. One old fellow, with energy surprising for his years, dashed one stone upon another, meanwhile leaping high into the air to avoid the flying splinters.

In this record of primitive Tasmanian life, which was primarily concerned with the food supply and the manufacture of simple implements of wood and stone, we have a picture that takes the imagination far back into the life of stone-age man as shown by the Mousterian group in Hall C.

Although Tasmania is on the opposite side of the world from Europe, and the Tasmanians had no known racial affinity or contacts with Europe, the Tasmanian aborigines preserved a type of life which prevailed in Europe 50,000 years ago, and earlier. It is a regrettable fact that the primitive hunters and stone-age men of Tasmania should have been harried from the world without serious effort to study the whole of their culture in its natural habitat.

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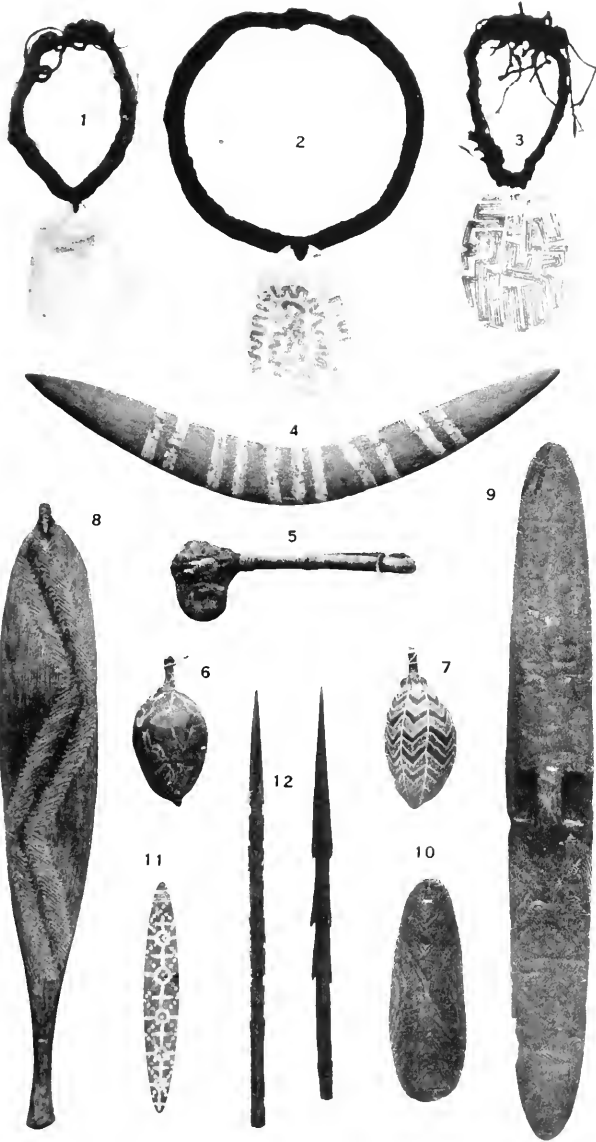
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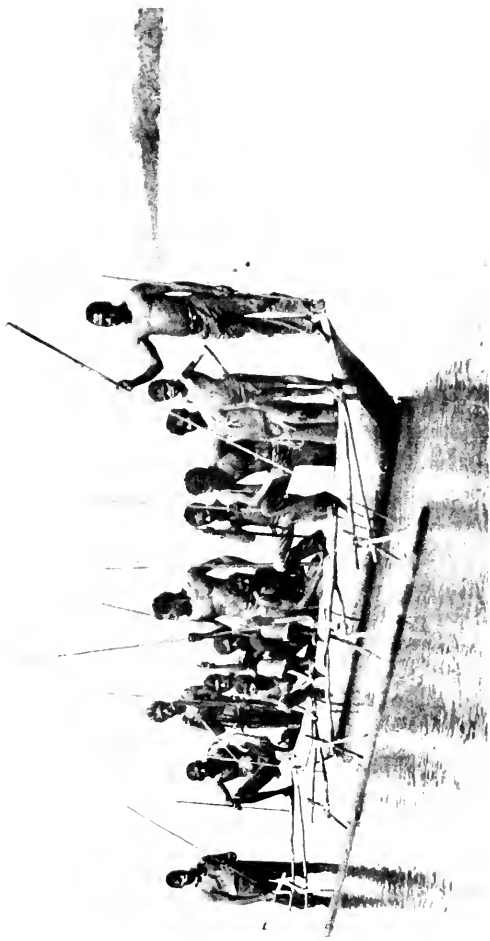


OBJECTS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA, FIELD MUSEUM COLLECTION



Courtesy of Keith Kennedy

MAKING A BASKET, GORDON VALE, NORTH QUEENSLAND



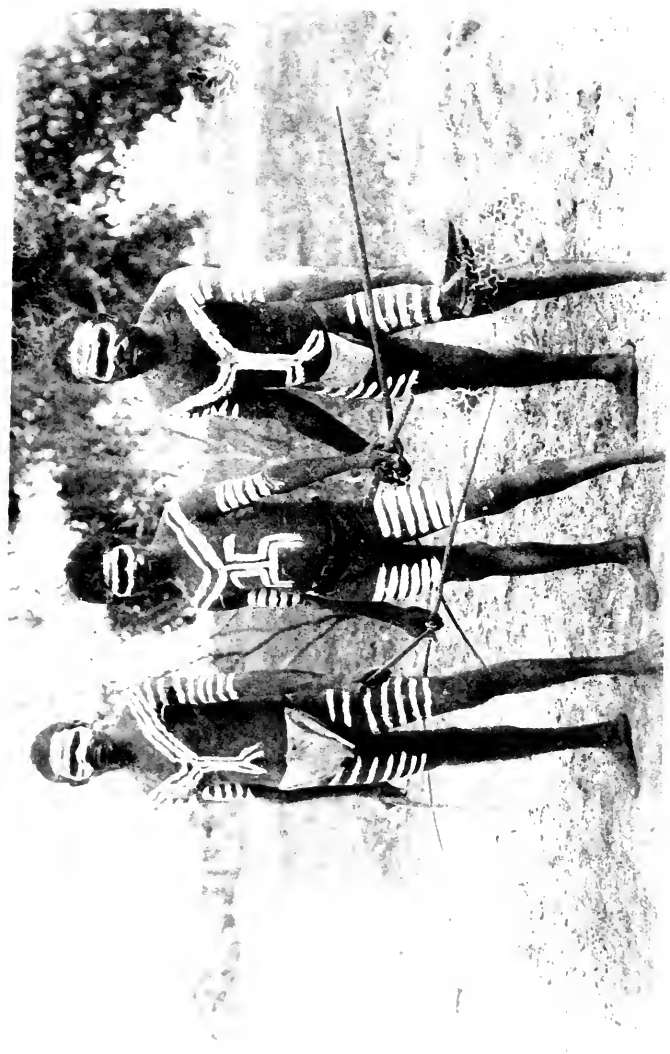
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OUTRIGGER CANOE ON THE ENDEAVOUR RIVER, NORTH QUEENSLAND



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PAINTING A SHIELD, NORTH QUEENSLAND



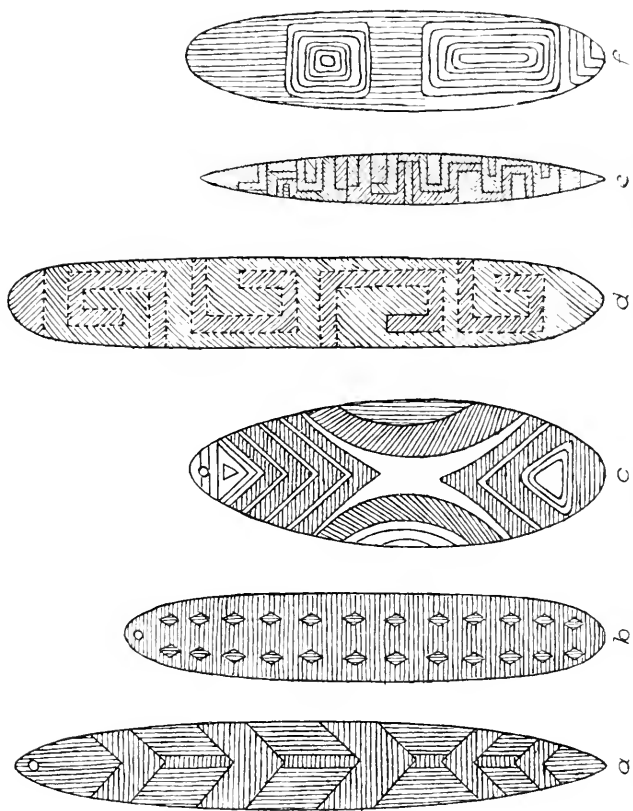
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MEN DECORATED FOR A CORROBOREE, BIGOOME, NORTHWEST AUSTRALIA



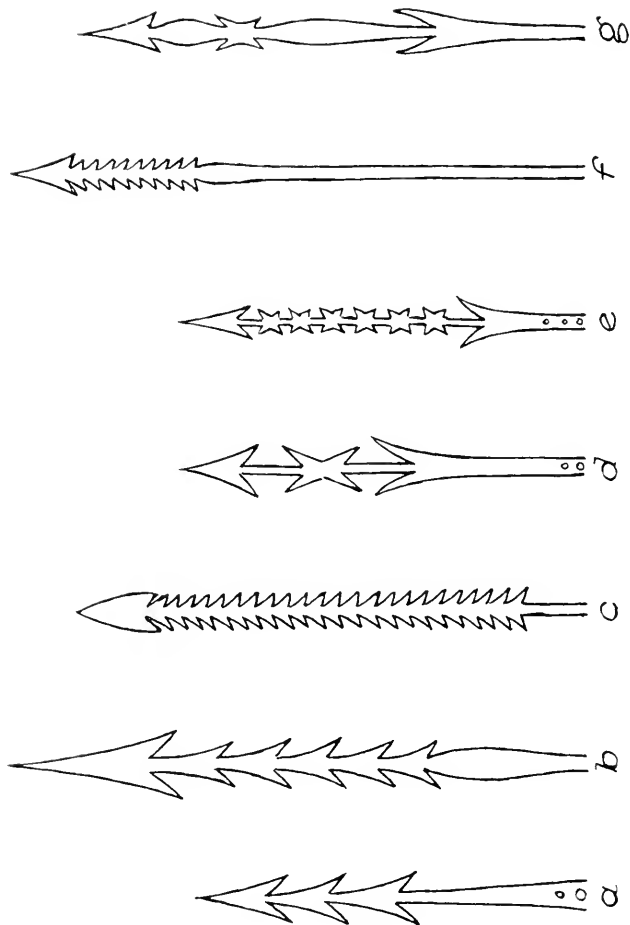
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ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN WOMEN, LANCEFIELD, MOUNT MARGARET, WESTERN AUSTRALIA



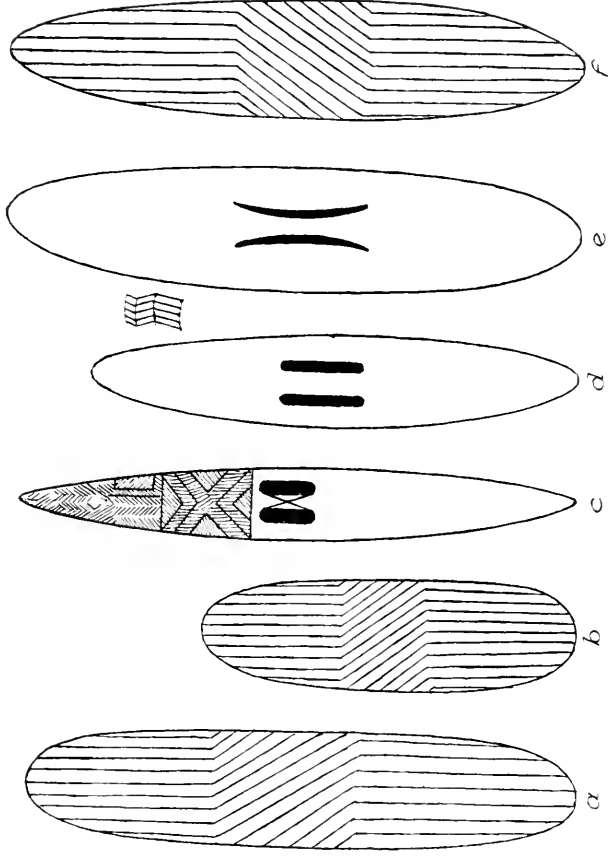
WHIRLERS (BULL-ROARERS) AND CHURINGA FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

a-c, Ashburton; *d, e*, Broome; *f*, Kimberley. About three-fifths actual size



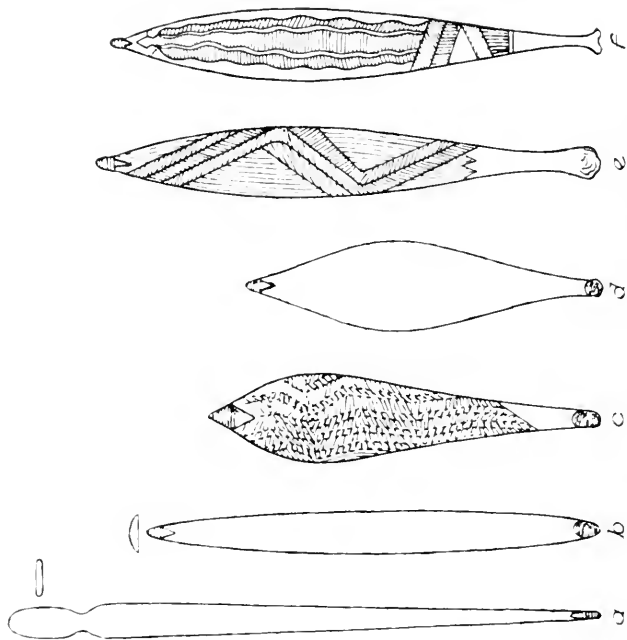
WOODEN SPEARHEADS FROM ASHBURTON, NORTHWEST AUSTRALIA

About one-third actual size



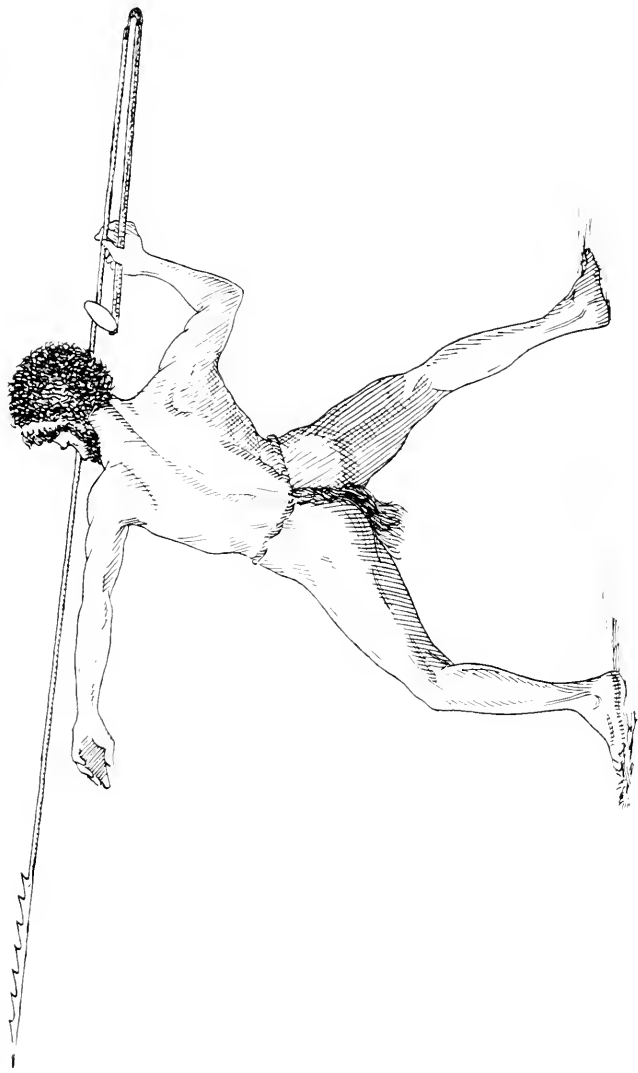
SIELDS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

α , Ashburton; b , Kalgoorlie; c , Broome; d , Kimberley; e , f , Central Murchison, back and front views. About one-fourth actual size



SPEAR-THROWERS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

a, Kimberley; *b*, Central and Lower Murchison; *c*, Ashburton; *d*, Eastern District; *e*, Mount Margaret; *f*, Murchison. About one-fifth actual size



Courtesy of N. W. Thomas

THROWING A SPEAR WITH A WOMMERA, NORTH QUEENSLAND



Courtesy of N. W. Thomas

THROWING A BOOMERANG, QUEENSLAND

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