

(No. 10.)



1898.

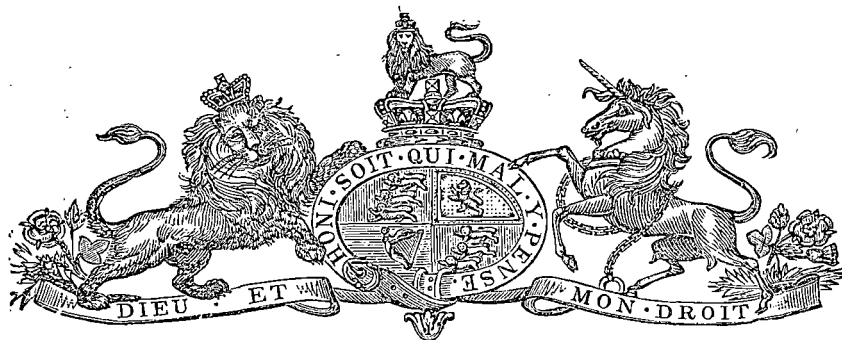
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

NOTES ON THE ABORIGINES OF TASMANIA:

Extracted from the Manuscript Journals of George Washington Walker;
with an Introduction, and "Some Notes on the Tribal Divisions of
the Aborigines of Tasmania," by James B. Walker, F.R.G.S.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.

Cost of printing—£3 10s.



NOTES ON THE ABORIGINES OF TASMANIA,

EXTRACTED FROM THE MANUSCRIPT JOURNALS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON WALKER,

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION

BY

JAMES B. WALKER, F.R.G.S.

IN the year 1832 Messrs. James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, two members of the Society of Friends, arrived at Hobart from England. The objects of their visit to the Australian Colonies were philanthropic. One purpose they had in view was an investigation of the condition of the prisoner population and the working of the penal system. Another was an enquiry into the treatment of the Aboriginal inhabitants. The various Governors afforded them every facility in their enquiries, and the reports which they made from time to time had a considerable influence in obtaining an amelioration of the condition of the large number of men then under penal discipline.

In October, 1832, (just 65 years ago), they paid a visit to the aboriginal establishment at Flinders Island. Mr. Backhouse was an accomplished naturalist, a keen and accurate observer, and rendered good service to science by his contributions to the Botany of Tasmania; and his "Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies," (London, 1843), has given an account of the visit to Flinders Island, and has preserved a mass of information respecting the aborigines and their habits, which forms a valuable addition to our very limited knowledge of this extinct race. On examining Mr. Walker's MS. Journal, which is in my possession, I found a vocabulary of native words and also some songs, which have never been printed. The relics of the native language are so few, that this list of words, taken down from the lips of the natives, has a distinct value; more especially so as it precedes by nearly fifteen years Dr. Milligan's well-known and more extensive vocabulary, which was compiled many years after the blacks had come under European influences. In submitting these fragments to the Royal Society it seemed desirable to take the opportunity of collecting Mr. Walker's observations on the aborigines, although part has already been published in his Memoirs. (London, 1862). The accounts of the race are so meagre that even the smallest reliable details respecting it recorded by an independent observer will have a value for anthropologists.

The deadly feud between the natives and the settlers which raged between 1825 and 1830, led to Governor Arthur's military operation known as the "Black Line." In October, 1830, some 3000 men took the field, to sweep the island from north to south, with the view of converging on the Oyster Bay and Big River tribes, and driving them into the *cul de sac* of Tasman's Peninsula. The march commenced on 7th October, 1830, and the line advanced southwards. But the blacks easily slipped through its straggling ranks, and when on 26th November it closed on East Bay Neck it was found that the prey had escaped. The total result of this levy *en masse*, at a cost of £30,000, was the capture of one solitary aborigine. Some months later it was discovered that the supposed formidable force opposed to the 3000 men of the line was considerably less than a hundred naked savages.

Consequent on the failure of Arthur's Military Movement, efforts were made to capture, either by persuasion or force, the "mobs" scattered over the island, with the view of removing them to a place of safety, where they would be under the care and protection of the Government, and powerless to molest the settlers further. By the end of 1830 some 56 had been captured. They were placed temporarily on Swan Island, in Bass Strait. This was only a desolate granite rock, and the blacks were soon removed to Gun Carriage, or Vansittart Island. This also proving unsuitable, they were finally transferred in 1831 to Flinders Island. As George Augustus Robinson, in his daring mission of conciliation, accomplished what the whole force of the colony had failed in, and persuaded other "mobs" to surrender themselves, fresh captives were continually transported to the new settlement. For 15 years Flinders was the home of the miserable remnant of the native tribes of Tasmania, and for the greater part of them it was destined to become their grave.

Messrs. Backhouse and Walker visited the settlement in the spring of 1832 (October), a few months after the blacks had been transported thither, and it is from a report made by them to Governor Arthur at his request,

and from the MS. journal of Mr. Walker, that I have gleaned a few particulars respecting the aborigines as they appeared when undergoing the process of civilisation on Flinders Island.

It was in September, 1832, that the Friends sailed from Hobart in the Government cutter *Charlotte*, placed at their disposal by Governor Arthur. The vessel touched at Port Arthur, which had been established two years before as a penal station, and then proceeded on her voyage to Flinders Island. After running considerable risk of shipwreck in the dangerous navigation of the Straits, the *Charlotte* anchored under Green Island, and a boat took the visitors to the Aboriginal Station, three miles off, at "The Lagoons." They say: "Though, according to their usual custom towards strangers, they at first seemed scarcely to notice us, yet, when spoken to by the Commandant, their cheerful countenances, hearty laughs, and good natured manners, produced an agreeable impression." The visitors noted (perhaps with surprise) that "their countenances exhibited none of that marked ferocity which has been ascribed to them." Further observation strengthened the first impression, and they came to the conclusion that the Tasmanian aborigines deserved the character of a good-tempered race.

There were at this time at the settlement 78 natives in all—44 men, 29 women, and only 5 children. They looked plump and healthy, notwithstanding that they had been suffering from shortness of provisions. The arrangements for supplies had been shamefully deficient. The white people had for some time been living on oatmeal and potatoes, which were far from good. The blacks, who abhorred oatmeal, lived on potatoes and rice. Fortunately mutton-birds (*Nectris brevicaudus*) supplemented their scanty provision. A little while before, when left in charge of Surgeon M'Lachlan on desolate Gun Carriage, if it had not been for some potatoes they obtained from the sealers, the unfortunate blacks would have been actually starved.

The site of the settlement at "The Lagoons" was most unsuitable. It was a narrow sandbank, running parallel with the shore, and producing nothing but fern and scrub. It was bounded on one side by the sea, and on the other side by a salt lagoon bordered with thick tea-tree, and cutting off access to the main.

When first placed on the islands the blacks had been put under the charge of most unsuitable officers—ignorant men, quite unfit for the difficult and delicate task of managing savages fresh from their native forests. It was not therefore strange that at first there was much disorder, and that quarrels between members of different tribes were of frequent occurrence. At this time, however, they were under the care of a commandant, who threw himself into the work before him with an unselfish enthusiasm. The commandant was Lieutenant William J. Darling, a young officer of the 63rd Regiment, a brother of Sir Charles Darling, who was afterwards (1863–66) Governor of Victoria. He was ably seconded by the surgeon, Archibald M'Lachlan. The self-denying exertions of these two officers for the welfare of the poor blacks cannot be too highly praised. To promote their advancement in civilisation the Commandant and Surgeon spared no pains. They treated them with uniform and patient kindness and consideration. They seldom sat down to breakfast or tea in their own little weatherboard huts without having some aborigines as guests, with the view of exciting in them a desire for improvement in civilisation.

Yet the arrangements for the aborigines, well meant as they undoubtedly were, seem to have been singularly injudicious. They were lodged at night in shelters or "breakwinds." These "breakwinds" were thatched roofs sloping to the ground, with an opening at the top to let out the smoke, and closed at the ends, with the exception of a doorway. They were twenty feet long by ten feet wide. In each of these from twenty to thirty blacks were lodged. The fires were made along the centre of the breakwind, and the people squatted or lay on the ground around them. Blankets were provided for them to sleep in. To savages accustomed to sleep naked in the open air beneath the rudest shelter, the change to close and heated dwellings tended to make them susceptible, as they had never been in their wild state, to chills from atmospheric changes, and was only too well calculated to induce those severe pulmonary diseases which were destined to prove so fatal to them.

The same may be said of the use of clothes. In their wild state the blacks had gone entirely naked in all weathers, protecting their bodies against the elements by rubbing them with grease. At the settlement they were compelled to wear clothes, which they threw off when heated or when they found them troublesome, and when wetted by rain allowed them to dry on their bodies. In the case of the Tasmanians, as with other wild tribes accustomed to go naked, the use of clothes had a most mischievous effect on their health. In their native bush the constant and strenuous exertion which they were compelled to make in hunting wild animals for necessary food kept them hardy and healthy. Cooped up in the settlement and regularly fed, they lost the motive for exertion, and sank into a life of listless inaction, in which they lost their natural vigour, and became an easy prey to any disease that attacked them.

Mr. R. H. Davies, who has given us one of the most reliable of all the accounts of the aborigines, remarks that in spite of their having been treated with uniform kindness in their captivity, their numbers rapidly decreased; the births were very few and the deaths numerous. "This," says he, "may have been in great measure owing to their change of living and food, but much more to their banishment from the mainland of Van Diemen's Land, which is visible from Flinders Island; and the natives have often pointed it out to me with an expression of the deepest sorrow depicted on their countenances." In fact, the unhappy captives pined and died from "home sickness."

How to treat the poor remnant of the native tribes was a difficulty, perhaps an insoluble problem under the circumstances. If they could have been left in possession of a portion of their ancient hunting-grounds—a reserve to which they could have been confined—they might have lived healthily and even happily for a long period of years, though even that would not have averted the final doom. But the feud between the two races had been too deadly to permit of their being left in proximity, and the seclusion of an island was imperative, as much for the protection of the blacks as for the safety of the whites.

To the credit of the authorities, it must be said that from the time Lieut. Darling took charge in 1832 every possible effort was made to secure the well-being of the few survivors of the native tribes. They were well supplied with food, and they supplemented the ordinary supplies by taking mutton-birds and their eggs, and, while the game lasted, by occasional hunting excursions. Tea and potatoes were their favourite diet. Of tea

highly sweetened they seemed to be able to drink any quantity. Milk they grew very fond of. Mutton and beef they preferred to salt meat and even to kangaroo ; but such rare luxuries they seldom had the opportunity of enjoying. Their appetites were enormous. Davies states that a native woman at the settlement was one day watched by an officer, and seen to eat between fifty and sixty mutton-bird eggs—as large as those of a duck—besides a double allowance of bread. Whether this story is true or not, I do not venture an opinion. But it is well known that the Australian native, like other savages accustomed to long compulsory fasts, has a bo-constrictor-like power of gorging himself far beyond the extreme capacity of a European.

The blacks on Flinders also developed an extreme fondness for tobacco. When not occupied in cooking or in hunting they were rarely without a pipe. One pipe was made to serve several. After the husband had taken a few whiffs it was passed to the wife, and then to others. If a stranger was present, nothing would please them more than that he also should take a whiff from the pipe.

The care of the authorities extended far beyond ensuring them plentiful food. No exertion was spared to drill these children of nature into the habits of a civilisation unto which they were not born. If not apt, they were certainly docile pupils. Their good humour, which struck the French voyagers as remarkable, is constantly referred to by the Friends. They say: "The opportunities we have had of forming an estimate of the aboriginal character have strongly impressed us with the opinion that they are not naturally a treacherous and ferocious nor a vindictive people. Their uniform cheerfulness and agreeableness of manner forbid the idea of inherent ferocity. The treachery and outrages they have experienced at the hands of Europeans excited at one time a spirit of revenge, under the influence of which retaliation was made on some of the innocent people of Van Diemen's Land as well as on the guilty, a thing not uncommon even in what are termed civilised wars. Some of those on the Settlement, who are known to have taken a part in avenging the wrongs of their countrymen, have since proved themselves to be men of kind and affectionate dispositions, and have won the return of the same kindly feelings which they have shown in their intercourse with each other."

Instances of their good-natured readiness to please are related by the Friends. One woman, on the visitors expressing a wish to have a sample of the inside of the fern-tree, which was an article of ordinary food with the blacks, made a journey of some miles into the bush to procure it. Another collected a considerable quantity of fern root, and prepared it in the native manner, because one of the visitors had desired to see it in the state in which the blacks were accustomed to eat it. In their intercourse with each other they showed a like good nature. The Friends noticed that in the daily distribution of food, though the division was often very unequal, there was no dissatisfaction because one got more than another. They showed the most perfect good temper throughout.

The absence of disturbances or crimes of violence during their captivity on Flinders Island is of itself a sufficient proof that the idea, so commonly entertained at the time, of their untamable ferocity, was not well founded. Yet, the Aborigines Committee, in 1830, in their Report to the Governor, stated their belief "that the Aborigines of this Colony are insensible to kindness, devoid of generous feelings, bent on revenge."

The tractability of the captive blacks at the Settlement was remarkable. They acted like good natured children, and were as imitative as monkeys. Thus, at a religious service, at which some of them were present, they behaved with great decorum, and during prayer turned their faces to the wall in imitation of the whites. When they were presented with Scotch caps, the young men drew themselves up in a line and imitated the manœuvres of soldiers. They showed a great desire to copy the ways of their white instructors. The men were particularly anxious to be supplied with trousers, but resented the offer of yellow trousers, the usual garb of prisoners. They also wanted to have stools to sit upon, and tables for their meals, and to be supplied with knives and forks like Europeans.

Some of the women learned to make bread, to wash clothes, and to sew, and to use soap and water daily.

The Friends remark: "The scrupulous care they evince not to take anything that does not belong to them entitles them to the character of honesty. They are observing, and have retentive memories, affording very sufficient proofs that they are not deficient in intellect. Among other traits, we remarked less indisposition to personal exertion than is usually attributed to savages. The willingness and promptitude with which they perform little services for those whom they consider their friends, as in bringing wood and water for daily use, show that they are not of a sluggish disposition when there is a sufficient inducement to labour . . . In the morning daily they may be seen walking in procession, each bearing a load of wood on his shoulder, which is cheerfully deposited in the proper place. They are said to have taken great pleasure in cutting and bringing in the wattles and grass for building and thatching; also in fencing, breaking up, and planting with potatoes the acre and a half of ground in front of their cottages [at Wybalenna]. The latter was accomplished almost entirely by their own unassisted efforts. . . They will generally do anything they are required to do that is reasonable. It is kind treatment that ensures its performance."

They showed all the usual improvidence of savages. Though they were finally led to take care of their tin plates and eating utensils and to keep them clean, it was at first difficult to prevent them throwing away these articles. They had been accustomed to a mutton-fish shell, or something as simple, as a drinking vessel, and could not understand the necessity of taking care of things adapted for permanent use. In hunting they destroyed the game recklessly, and could not be restrained from killing the kangaroo as long as their dogs would run. On an adjoining island, where there were large numbers of wallaby, the blacks in three or four hunting excursions killed over a thousand head. By this kind of wholesale destruction, kangaroo, once very abundant in the neighbourhood of the Flinders Settlement, soon became extremely scarce.

The Commandant found the greatest difficulty in inducing them to save the wallaby skins, it being the custom to throw the wallaby on the fire and singe off the fur. He explained to them the value of the skins, and the articles they could get in exchange. He gave presents to those who brought in skins; but it seemed impossible to teach them any idea of barter, or indeed to get them to look beyond the immediate moment.

In January, 1834, Messrs. Backhouse and Walker again visited Flinders Island at the request of Governor Arthur. They found the blacks removed to a place called by the sealers Pea Jacket Point, then rechristened

"Civilisation Point," about fifteen miles north of their old location. The village was named "Wybalenna," signifying, in the language of the Ben Lomond tribe, "Blackman's Houses." There were at this time 111 aborigines on the island—55 males and 56 females. Of the whole number only 16 were children. Wybalenna was a much better location than The Lagoons. There was sufficient water, good pasturage, and land fit for cultivation as gardens. The officers of the establishment had weatherboard houses, and about twenty thatched wattle and plaster huts had been built for the blacks.

The visitors found that in two years the aborigines showed progress in at least the outward appearance of civilisation. They now had a regular instructor or catechist, who tried to instil into their minds some ideas of religion. To aid in this work he had attempted a translation of the first three chapters of Genesis into the language of the Ben Lomond tribe! The worthy catechist's version is obviously worthless from a linguistic point of view, whatever effect it may have had on the native mind in other ways.

The catechist made most persevering efforts to instruct the blacks, and even succeeded in teaching some of the boys and younger men to read a little.*

At the time of the Friends' visit to the Flinders Settlement in 1834, the health of the surviving aborigines was good. A great mortality had occurred in the rainy season of the preceding year, chiefly among the men from the West Coast tribes, who had been the shortest time on the island. Between 1st January and 31st December 1833, out of some 140 at the settlement, 31 had died: of these, sixteen belonged to the West Coast tribes. Most of the deaths resulted from sudden and acute affections of the chest—pneumonia or phthisis. This kind of disease appears to have often made great havoc among them when at large in their own country. In the previous winter it had been more fatal among the few aborigines at large on the West Coast than amongst those at the Settlement on Flinders. It was proposed, as likely to conduce to the better health of the natives, that they should wear shoes!

Thus far I have followed Mr. Walker's account. The rest of the brief and melancholy history of the remnant of the Tasmanian aborigines is soon told.

In 1835, George Augustus Robinson, who had just completed his mission by bringing in the last party of wanderers, was sent by the Governor to take charge of the Flinders establishment. In a speech which he made at Sydney some few years later, he gave a long account of his administration. He boasted that his efforts to lead forward the blacks in the scale of civilisation had met with flattering success. Their minds were beginning to expand. In their intercourse with each other they were affable and courteous. They were placed under no restraint, but enjoyed the fullest degree of personal freedom. They were instructed in the Christian religion. Two services were held on Sunday, and others during

* In 1834 five or six of the boys were removed from Flinders Island and placed in the Government Orphan School at New Town, near Hobart. It is stated that some of them showed very fair intelligence. Mr. Walker mentions that two lads (Arthur and Friday) who in 1832 were sunk in the barbarous habits of their race, showed considerable improvement after two years' instruction at the Orphan School. One of them—George Walter Arthur—had not only learnt to read fairly well, but also wrote a hand which would not have disgraced a European youth of the same age. The master of the school informed Mr. Walker that, with some exceptions, the aboriginal children were not inferior in capacity to the European children in his charge.

the week. The services were conducted in English, which the natives well understood. Attendance was voluntary, yet all attended. He had established schools,—a day-school for boys, a day-school for girls, an evening school, and a Sunday-school. Periodical examinations were held, from which it appeared that the youths were able to answer questions in the leading events of Scripture, in Christian doctrine, arithmetic, geography, and several points of general information. Some of them could write very fairly. The girls were taught sewing and knitting, and could make clothes. The people had neat cottages and gardens, and conformed in every respect to European habits. He had formed an aboriginal police, and a court composed of himself and three chiefs, who acted as constables. He had established a circulating medium, and also a market to which the natives brought their produce. The men had in three years cleared a considerable area of ground, and had made a road nine miles long into the interior of the island. He concludes with the remark, "The only drawback on the establishment is the great mortality among them; but those who survive are happy, contented, and useful members of society."

A significant comment on his "flattering success!" While Robinson and others were doing their best to make them into a civilised people, the poor blacks had given up the struggle, and were solving the difficult problem by dying. The very efforts made for their welfare only served to hasten their inevitable doom. The white man's civilisation proved scarcely less fatal to them than the white man's musket. Yet it would be wrong to estimate lightly the disinterested labours of the men who perseveringly worked for the fading race. Amongst these men the name of Mr. Robert Clark, the catechist, stands first. From the time of his appointment to Flinders Island in 1834 to his death in 1850 this estimable man gave himself with an absolute devotion to the care of the unhappy remnant of the captive tribes. The poor blacks on their part showed that they were not "insensible to kindness, or devoid of generous feelings." While Mr. Clark lived they regarded him with a touching love and veneration. When he died, after sixteen years spent in their service, they mourned him as their one true and constant friend, and to the last the miserable remnant of Tasmania's native tribes affectionately cherished the memory of their beloved "Father Clark."

In 1838 the aborigines on Flinders, probably at the suggestion of Robinson, who had been appointed Protector of the Aborigines in Port Phillip, petitioned Governor Franklin to be removed to that colony. The Home Authorities interposed and forbade the removal. On Robinson's departure from Flinders, Captain Smith, and afterwards Mr. Fisher, took charge of the settlement. In 1842 Dr. Jeannerett received the appointment of Commandant from Sir John Franklin. Five years later, in 1847, there remained only 44 individuals, viz., 12 men, 22 women, and 10 children from 4 to 17 years of age. Some of the children were half-castes.

In the face of considerable opposition from the colonists, the Government resolved to remove the few survivors to Oyster Cove, in D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Dr. James Milligan was appointed superintendent, and under his care the transfer was effected. Among the children thus removed was Fanny Cochrane (now Mrs. Fanny Smith), who is still living on her farm at Port Cygnet, the sole survivor of the Flinders Island settlement. At Oyster Cove the blacks rapidly deteriorated. A new phase of civilisation was here presented to them

in the shape of low whites and rum. The mortality was accelerated by the drunken habits into which many of them fell. A few lingered on—a disgraced and degraded remnant. In 1854 there remained only three men, eleven women, and two children—sixteen in all.

In 1865, Billy Lanné, the last male aborigine, died, and only four women remained. Truganini, the last survivor of her race, died in 1877.

Such is the melancholy history of the native inhabitants of Tasmania.

NOTES FROM MR. WALKER'S JOURNAL.

THE Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land are rather below the average stature of Englishmen. Both sexes are stout, and their limbs well proportioned; a few incline to corpulency. They walk remarkably erect, assuming a dignified mien, and in all their movements exhibit agility and ease. Their complexion is very dark, almost black; a few are of lighter hue, approaching to the colour of copper. The soles of their feet are as light as those of Europeans who go without shoes. The palms of their hands are also much lighter than their bodies. There is a considerable variety of features among them. Generally, thick lips and flat distended nostrils are the characteristics of the race. Many of their countenances are pleasing, and very few of them forbidding; one man, with a black beard and moustache, had a countenance strikingly Jewish. Their hair is uniformly black and woolly, like the African negroes, whom, in many respects, they nearly resemble. In their savage state the men let their hair grow, and ornament it with grease and red ochre, or, as they term it, *ball-downny*. The women shave their heads. Neither sex wear any clothing, unless a few strips of fur, which are sometimes tied round the thickest part of their limbs, can be called such. Both sexes wear strings of shells as necklaces. The shells are of spiral form, varying in size from that of a pea to a horse-bean. In their natural state they are not remarkable for beauty, but when the outer coating is stripped off they show varied colours of considerable brilliancy. The aborigines prepare them for use by burning grass over wood embers, when the action of the pyroligneous acid removes the thin coating from the shell. Some of their necklaces were formed of kangaroo sinews, one twisted round another so as to resemble braid, and then dyed with red ochre, their favourite colour, and hung in several folds round the neck. They are fond of smearing their bodies with grease and red ochre, which enables them to bear with more ease the exposure to the weather. They make incisions in their flesh, particularly on the thighs, arms, and breasts. This is done with a sharp flint, so as generally to form longitudinal lines parallel to each other. The wounds are kept open by artificial means until proud flesh is formed, and a lasting protuberant scar produced. These marks are rendered more numerous by a custom which prevails among them of lacerating any part of their bodies affected with pain. This they suppose to be productive of relief. The bones of deceased relatives, which some of them wear about them as tokens of remembrance, are frequently tied on the affected limb for the same purpose. Roomeh-tymyenna, the wife of a chief, carries constantly on her bosom the skull of an infant. They connect some superstitious notions with the practice, evidently regarding it in the light of a charm.

As soon as it was dark on the evening of our arrival, preparations were made for a *corrobbery*, or dance, for joy at the arrival of the cutter. The men strip off their clothes, but the women, who occasionally join in the dance, make no alteration in their adopted dress. A fire

of sticks, or boughs that make a lively blaze, was made, around which the men formed a circle, and began a kind of song or chant, consisting of expressions frequently repeated, and uttered in a drawling monotone. The subjects of these songs are various; sometimes the pursuits of hunting, and the enumeration of the animals that become a prey to their dexterity; at other times the feats of war, and their sanguinary conflicts with adverse tribes. A very common description relates to the habits of animals, such as the emu and kangaroo; and, since they have become acquainted with Europeans, to the horse, the cow, &c. They accompany the words with significant gestures and actions. Thus in the emu-dance, by bending forward an arm over the fire, and making a movement with the hand, like the motion of a bird's head, they imitate the bird in its peculiar habits. In the horse-dance, which they call *barracoota*,* they lay hold of each other's loins, one following another, and imitate the prancing of the animal, while a woman stands by and imitates the driver, gently tapping them with a stick as they pass before her. They have also the thunder-and-lightning dance, in which they stamp with their feet and whirl round the fire. A frequent manœuvre during their *corroberrys* is to leap from the ground while running in a circle round the fire, and, in descending, to turn their faces to it, crouching at the same time to the ground on their haunches, and striking the earth with their hands. The exertion during these performances is often very violent, occasioning individuals to drop out of the ring, bathed in perspiration, until they have recovered. The good humour they exhibit throughout the amusement, which generally lasts for some hours, often till midnight, is remarkable, considering the excitement that prevails. Sometimes one will jostle against another, and perhaps occasion a fall to both, which is sure to be succeeded by a general laugh. Though the nudity of the men must necessarily offend the eye of a European, there is not the slightest action or gesture that would offend the modesty of the most scrupulous.

On another evening we visited their shelters or "breakwinds." From twenty to thirty sleep in each shelter. Here they generally cook their food and eat their meals, and here in the evening they sit round the fire and talk, or one sings, while the rest listen with deep interest and attention, frequently applauding by a general shout. At the suggestion of Mr. Archibald MacLachlan, the surgeon, they sang two of their songs for our benefit. The first was sung by the chief of the Port Dalrymple tribe. The same words were repeated many times in succession, accompanied by many impassioned gestures, and an exertion of breath almost painful to witness. Occasionally the singer gave a short sigh, as if his breath was spent, in which the rest united with one accord. The shout that succeeded allowed the performer a moment's pause, when he resumed the song with great animation. During the course of the song the chief often became highly excited, pointing significantly with

* Jorgenson gives as the equivalent for "horse," *baircouthau*; Norman gives *parcouthenar*.

his finger, and showing remarkable expression in his countenance, as if the subject was most important, the people listening meanwhile with profound attention. After the chief had concluded, the women began a song in chorus, which showed a greater knowledge of music. I was very much surprised to hear some sing tenor, while others sang treble. It was a hunting song, enumerating the animals that the young married women are wont to chase. I afterwards took down the words of the song from the lips of some of the women.*

The tribes now show little appearance of jealousy. Many, when in the bush, were in a state of hostility; but their animosities are merged in the general feeling of good-will which seems to pervade the settlement. If there is anything that betrays the remembrance of former feuds, it is hunting. They show a reluctance to hunt together if the tribes that compose the party have once been at warfare, unless the Commandant or Surgeon be with them, when his influence is considered a sufficient guarantee against harm.

Two men of the Western or Port Dalrymple tribe exhibited before us the manner in which quarrels are decided amongst them; or, it may be described as the mode of giving vent to those feelings of irritation which amongst Englishmen would end in a pugilistic encounter. The parties approach one another face to face, and, folding their arms across their breasts, shake their heads (which occasionally come in contact) in each other's faces, uttering at the same time the most vociferous and angry expressions, until one or other of them is exhausted. This custom is called by them *growling*, and, from the specimen afforded us by the Western lads, will not probably issue in anything worse than a bloody nose or lip.

Quarrels are rare among the aborigines of the settlement, but when they do occur some of their tokens of displeasure are odd and unaccountable. One of the men had a difference with his wife, because she had broken something which he highly prized. Instead of showing his displeasure by taking a stick and retaliating on the offender, he rose and deliberately cut the feet of seven who happened to be lying near him asleep, but offered no kind of violence to his wife. After this burst of rage, his anger was appeased, and they were reconciled. The Commandant, hearing of the circumstance, had the man brought before him, and told him that as through his misconduct the women would be unable to bring their quantum of water from the well, the offender was required to bring all the water himself. Without saying a word or making the least difficulty, the man set about his task, which he soon completed, and there the affair ended.

It is curious that the aborigines, on occasions of this sort mentioned above, do not generally show a disposition to retaliate on the person who thus wreaks his vengeance upon them; they rather endeavour to get out of his way.

Another quarrel fell out thus:—A married woman had selected a certain tree, according to their practice when in the bush, which tree, in such case, is considered the representative of the person who makes choice of it, and is regarded as their inviolable property, at all times to be held sacred. Through some accident this tree, which had been selected by Roomtyenna, was pulled down or mutilated by a party of her countrymen, which she so violently resented that, snatching up a firebrand, she ran in amongst them and dealt her blows very freely

around. Her husband, who was of the party, at length struck her on the head with his waddy, and drew blood. When he saw that she bled, he was apparently as disconcerted as she was, and would have gladly made it up; but the lady was not so easily appeased, and it was some time before Trygoomy-poonauh could regain his wife's smiles.

On a visit to the site of the intended new settlement, at a place named by the sealers Pea-jacket Point, we were accompanied by the Commandant, four native men, and two of their wives. The history of the attachment that led to the union of one of these couples is somewhat romantic. Panneh-rooneh had long felt an affection for Pellouny-myna, but no persuasions of his could induce her to become his wife. One day they were crossing a river along with many more of their countrymen, when Pellouny-myna was suddenly seized with an attack of illness and became unable to support herself. The faithful lover was at her side. Seizing her in his arms he bore her to a place of safety, and during her illness, which was tedious, he nursed her with the greatest attention and most affectionate assiduity. She at length recovered, when, overcome with gratitude, she declared that none but Panneh-rooneh should be her husband; and from that time they have become united by the most inviolable attachment.

On our return the day was very wet and boisterous. The aborigines are not fond of travelling in the wet, nor will they do so except in cases of necessity. They show the same reluctance to travelling in the dark. As soon as it is dusk they take care to remind you that it is time to *crackney*, that is, to rest. It is well known that in their wild state they hardly ever encamped for two nights together in the same place, in consequence of their aversion to the dirt which accumulates about a camp. The number of fires which this custom has given rise to is perhaps one of the causes that the number of these people has been so greatly over-rated. I was surprised to remark their susceptibility of fatigue in going long distances. It does not appear that they have been in the habit of making long or forced marches. Each tribe confining themselves generally to a district seldom exceeding twenty to thirty miles in its widest extent, this peculiarity may be easily accounted for. Their principal journeys were those made in the summer season to the highlands from the lower tracts (the haunt of the game), which were their resort in the winter; and these journeys did not generally require any extraordinary expedition.

This short excursion has given us a further opportunity of estimating the character of the aborigines; and the favourable opinion we had previously formed of their disposition, and especially of their capabilities for improvement, is more than ever confirmed. They require to be treated with much discretion and forbearance. They are more easily led than driven; for, though they are very tractable and accessible to kindness, it is easy to perceive that they consider themselves a free people. If they do service for others, they do it through courtesy. There is nothing that is servile or abject in their character when they are not under the influence of fear. We are perpetually reminded that in their taste for amusement, and in some respects in their capacities, they are children, though more tractable than the generality of children; but, in many things that occur within the range of their knowledge and acquirements, they show a quickness of perception and powers of reflection that prove them to be a race far from deficient in intellect, and highly susceptible of improvement.

* See p. 11, for song with interlinear translation.

From anything I have been able to learn, the aborigines do not seem to have any notion of a superior and beneficent Being who rules the world. They have some indistinct ideas of an evil spirit, whom they style "the devil," especially when talking with Europeans, but of whom there is reason to believe they have had original notions, and for whom they have an appropriate name in their own language. All diseases and casualties are attributed to the agency of this malevolent power, who is also thought to preside over the elements, especially in the phenomena of thunder and lightning, of which they are accordingly much afraid. When one of A. Cottrell's party was asked what had caused the death of one of his comrades at the Hunter's Islands, he answered "The devil!" One of them imitated the symptoms that usually attend consumption in its last stages. There is no doubt that they entertained the notion before their intercourse with Europeans. An idea is becoming prevalent among them which looks like the recognition of a state of being after death. It is professed to be believed by some of them that they are transformed after death into white men, and that they return under this renewed form to an island in the Straits, where there is abundance of game, and where they have the pleasure of again hunting, and subsisting upon such animals as they killed in the chase during their lifetime; but I am disposed to believe that this has not originated with themselves, particularly as they connect it with some vague idea respecting the deceased visiting England, or at least coming from beyond seas ere he inhabit the island in question. The want of knowledge of their language renders the information that can be gathered on these interesting subjects very vague.

With regard to form of government, very little seems to have existed among the aborigines. A sort of patriarchal authority under certain limitations has been exercised by the chiefs of the respective tribes; but they have been far from exacting an implicit obedience to their commands, and in many respects their authority appears to have been little more than nominal; few of the mob consisting of more persons than might be included in one large family, the influence of the chief, who is generally in years, has probably been of the parental kind. The people at the settlement call their chiefs by the appellation of Father, and speak of the members of their own tribes as brothers and sisters. When a separation for a long period has happened, on meeting again they show all the attachment of relatives. An instance of this occurred at Woolnorth, when two women, who had lived with sealers, were brought in. Jumbo, another woman who was present, called one of these her sister, having belonged to the same mob as herself. A. Cottrell informed me that their interview was very affecting. Neither spoke for some time, but, throwing their arms round each other's necks, they remained in that attitude, the tears trickling down their cheeks, until at length, these first emotions having somewhat subsided, they began to talk and laugh, and exhibit all the demonstrations of extravagant joy.

The natives show a great dislike to allusions to the absent, whether the separation be caused by difference of situation or by death. If the name of the absent person be mentioned, it is customary with them, when with Europeans, to signify their displeasure by signs, as if they considered it unpropitious.

Like all persons in a savage state, the natives eat more than would be convenient to a European. In their wild condition they were subject to scarcity of food,

which, being succeeded by the return of abundance, would induce them to fill themselves to repletion. They eat almost every animal that inhabits the woods, from the emu and kangaroo down to the kangaroo-rat. Mutton-birds and penguins are the principal birds used by them, emus being very scarce. There are some other birds that are considered good eating, as the swan and the duck; but these they cannot often catch, unless it be the young swans. They are very partial to their eggs. The emu is considered a great delicacy, which may be one reason that emus are more numerous now than a few years ago, when the number of aborigines in the bush was greater. The roots eaten by the natives are extremely numerous and abundant, as the fern (a species much the same as that common in England), which is eaten either roasted or raw. The upper extremity of the stem of the fern-tree is also a favourite article of food, and a number of other things which I am unable to describe. There is a species of punk or fungus found on the trunks or among the roots of decayed trees, which contributes to the support of the blacks, as well as the white grub, which is also found in rotten timber. Of the latter the natives are extravagantly fond, eating them raw as well as roasted. A species of truffle, known in the colony by the name of native bread, found in the vicinity of decayed wood, and of the order of *Fungi*, is a favourite article of food; so also is a large lizard, often twelve or fourteen inches in length, and called the iguana.

A custom prevails amongst them for which I can assign no reason, nor do they seem themselves able to give any. Some will eat only the male of a particular species, others only the female; and I am assured by those who know well their habits, that they will rather starve than infringe this rule. The morning we arrived at Pea-jacket, a wallaby was taken by Tommy, at a time when meat was by no means plentiful; he, however, gave the whole of it away, nor could I induce him to taste it. It was a male, and the only answer I could get from him was that he never ate the male of that animal. The rest of the party partook of it. Butter, or food that is fat or greasy, they show at first an aversion to; the animals that inhabit the forest, especially the kangaroo and wallaby, are generally lean.

They seem to have been acquainted with no other mode of cooking than that of roasting. Boiling was quite strange to them, and meat prepared in that way appears less agreeable to them than the other. The plan they adopt in cooking mutton-birds is, to throw the bird on the fire until all the feathers are singed off, when it is withdrawn and gutted. When several are prepared in this manner, they are spitted on a stick between two and three feet in length, one end of which is run into the ground, while the other enables the person who is standing by to turn the birds, or give them such a direction towards the fire as ensures their being properly cooked.

The animals were cooked in the usual summary method; first, by throwing them on the fire until the hair was singed, after which the entrails were extracted, and the carcase returned to the fire until sufficiently roasted. The eggs were also roasted among the embers. They cooked the shell-fish (*Haliotis*, or mutton-fish) very nicely by placing them on the embers with the fish uppermost until they are roasted. They then insert the end of a long stick into the fish, which readily leaves the shell; and, were there no better fare, we should have thought them very tolerable food, though the large ones are apt to be tough.

The blacks make very neat, or, at least, very useful, baskets of native grass, which the women plait in such

manner as to render them strong and effective for holding the few articles they carry about with them. These are also used in fishing. The women are excellent swimmers, and are most expert in diving for shell-fish. These employments devolve almost exclusively on the females, though the men are generally practised in them in degree. In diving for crayfish, the women take a basket in their hand, and, on reaching the rocks at the bottom, they dextrously seize the crayfish with their fingers, and, putting them quickly into the basket, ascend to the surface. In the same way, they procure mutton-fish, oysters, mussels, and several other kinds of shell-fish, a species of food they are particularly partial to.

In Safety Cove, Port Arthur, we saw some of the aboriginal women dive for fish. They appear to be half amphibious, such is their dexterity in the water, and, what is more singular, they appear to float with their heads in an upright position above water, without any effort, and this in the midst of kelp and other seaweed that would terrify the generality of skilful swimmers. They put aside the weed with their hands, or lift it over their heads as it becomes wrapt round them, and fearlessly dive head foremost into the midst of it, passing the branches of kelp through their hands as a sailor would a rope. When they see a crayfish on the bottom, they seize it by the back and ascend promptly to the surface, where they readily disengage themselves from the kelp and weed, and throw their prey to their companions on shore. Sometimes they put their heads a little below the surface, and look along the bottom until they descry a shell-fish, when in a moment their heads appear above the surface, and, diving to the bottom, they secure their prey. The men are said to be far inferior to the women in diving, as they consider it the province of the females to procure fish. The aborigines are excessively fond of shell-fish.

On our visit to Macquarie Harbour, in May, 1832, we observed traces of the aborigines in several places about Port Davey and the sea shore near the mouth of Macquarie Harbour. There were numerous places where they had had fires, about which the shells of mutton-fish, oysters, mussels, crayfish, limpets, and periwinkles were scattered. Near Wellington Head there were the remains of some boats, formed of strips of the swamp tea-tree of Macquarie Harbour (*Melaleuca decussata*). We learned from the pilot (Mr. Lucas) that, about three months ago, he saw five of these, containing three or four persons each, inclusive of children, cross the Harbour from the northern shore. Each of them was drawn across by a man swimming on each side of the boat, holding it with one hand. He therefore concludes the number that visit that neighbourhood to be from twenty to thirty. He says they are shy, but have not committed any outrage. They exchanged a girl of about fourteen for a dog; but the girl, not appearing to like her situation, she was taken back by them, and the dog returned.

We learned from A. Cottrell some further particulars respecting the aborigines. The Western tribes appear to have been generally in the practice of burning their dead. The body is placed in an upright posture on logs of wood, other logs are piled around it till the superstructure assumes a conical form. The pile is then fired, and occasionally replenished with fuel, till the remains are consumed to ashes. These are carefully collected by the relatives of the deceased, and are tied up in a piece of kangaroo skin, and worn about their persons, not only as tokens of remembrance, but as a charm against disease and accident. It is common for

the survivors to besmear their faces with the ashes of the deceased. Those who suffer from the same complaint of which the dead man died resort to the same practice as a means of cure. It is also customary to sing a dirge every morning for a considerable time after the death of their friends. The chief relative takes the most prominent part on these occasions; but it is not confined to relatives; many others join in the lamentation, and exhibit all the symptoms of unfeigned sorrow. Besmearing the face with the ashes of the deceased is generally an accompaniment; and tears may often be seen streaming down the cheeks of the mourners.

A singular idea prevails among the natives, that no one actually dies till the sun sets. If the parties are dead in point of fact, the survivors profess to regard the symptoms as mere indications that life will depart as soon as the sun goes down, and until that period they do not treat them as dead."

Under date 9th November, 1832, Mr. Walker writes:—

"There are, it is supposed, the remains of only four tribes at large in the island. Three of them frequent the coast between Macquarie Harbour and Cape Grim. The fourth tribe frequent the district of Port Davey. It is the opinion of both G. A. Robinson and A. Cottrell that these tribes do not include more than a hundred individuals, although they are not among those whose numbers have been thinned by coming into hostile collision with Europeans, with the exception of one tribe, that has on two or three occasions encountered the Van Diemen's Land Company's servants. Individuals have in these encounters been killed on both sides, but the number is very limited on either. This strongly confirms the opinion we have for some time entertained, that the number of aborigines in the island has been greatly exaggerated. It does not appear (admitting that there are about a hundred in the four tribes yet in the bush) that the number now in existence in the bush and at the aboriginal settlement exceeds 220 or 230. Allowing that their numbers have been thinned by the warfare that has subsisted between them and the whites, and that disease has also tended to thin their ranks (which appears to have been the case, especially among the Bruny Island natives), it does not seem probable that the whole of the aboriginal population, from the time of the landing of Europeans to the present moment, has ever at one time much exceeded five or six hundred individuals."

SPECIMENS OF THE LANGUAGE SPOKEN BY THE
ABORIGINES OF VAN DIEMEN'S LAND:—TWO
POPULAR SONGS.—TRANSLATION OF GENESIS,
CHAP. I.—ABORIGINAL NAMES OF MEN AND
WOMEN.

15 October, 1832.—Several of the aborigines were invited into the Commandant's hut for the purpose of enabling me to take down a few words as specimens of the language. The plan I adopted was to point to different objects, which they named, several repeating the word for my better information. At a subsequent period, I uttered the words in the hearing of others with whom I had had no communication on the subject of their language. If these understood my expressions, and pointed to the object the word was intended to represent, I took for granted I had obtained with tolerable accuracy the word used by them for that purpose. When I read to them in their own language one of their native songs, they were beyond measure astonished and gratified, fol-

lowing the words with their voices, and frequently interrupting me with shouts of approbation. Their language appears to me to be far from inharmonious, and, when accompanied by a chanting tune, as in the songs of the women, is pleasing to the ear.

Pronunciation.

English sound of *a, e, i, o, u*—*a* (as in *ball*).
Tasmanian orthography, *e, y, i, o, u*—*au*.
English, *a* (as in *bar*), *e* (as in *left*), long sound of *a* (as in *pale*).
Tasmanian, *a* *eh* *ai*.

Other sounds according to English modes of spelling. The syllables marked with a long line above are those on which emphasis should be placed.

Vocabulary.

Pāninn̄wāthinn̄h.....	the head.
Plēnn̄rreh wārr̄h.....	the ear.
Lēhpēhn̄h.....	the eyes.
Minn̄rrehwārr̄h.....	the nose.
Kēhm̄yn̄h.....	the cheek.
Kēhm̄unn̄h.....	the chin.
Tūkkēhkullā.....	the thigh.
Yān̄h.....	the teeth.
M̄yn̄h.....	the tongue.
Mōn̄h.....	the lips.
K̄ythinn̄h.....	the skin or hair.
N̄yl̄h.....	the eyelash.
Tēhn̄yn̄h.....	the nail.
Bullēhb̄yn̄h.....	the bones.
Lōōrēnn̄h.....	the leg.
Lāngēhn̄h.....	the foot.
Lāngēhn̄h p̄yn̄h-wāthinn̄h.....	the toes.
Ann̄h min̄n̄h.....	the hand.
Mēkk̄h thinn̄h pēpp̄yn̄h..	the finger.
Trēhn̄ythā wāthinnā.....	the blood.
M̄yn̄h.....	I or me.
N̄yn̄h.....	thou or you..
Nāmēnn̄lunn̄y.....	they or them.
Nār̄h cōōp̄h.....	very good.
P̄yn̄ickēttā.....	quickly.
Pān̄h pēckinn̄nn̄h.....	a little boy.
Lāck̄yrā.....	fern root.
Tōppl̄ētē.....	to walk.
Pōkērrākān̄y.....	to talk.
Nōōngēnn̄h wāngēn dūnn̄h.....	to run.
Lūngēhb̄y nān̄y.....	to strike.
Lār̄n̄y.....	to beat.
Crāckn̄y.....	to sit down or rest.
Ningēnn̄h.....	to bring.
L̄yp̄rēnn̄y.....	a house.
L̄yḡunn̄yēh.....	skin or exterior covering.

Trārt̄y.....	stupid.
Kēpēhḡinn̄h.....	to eat.
Tringēḡinn̄h.....	to swallow.
Gibl̄h.....	to eat
T̄ywēh rātt̄yn̄h.....	the wind blows.
Wāk̄h lēnnā.....	the sun shines.
Nūgḡh tēnnā.....	it rains.
Lingēnn̄h būnn̄h.....	a swan's egg.
Wōōm̄err̄h.....	wood.
Cōāntānn̄h.....	the ground.
Wib̄r.....	a black man.
Lōōb̄err̄h.....	a black woman.
Lōōwinn̄y.....	a white man.

Lōōn̄h.....	woman or girl (white or black.)
Gād̄yēh.....	plenty or many.
Tr̄ymēpā.....	take it.
Nick̄eh.....	this, the.
Pōt̄yā.....	No.
Alle; allā; arpu.....	Yes.

There are some objects, and these very numerous, for which every tribe, or "mob," has a different name. There are also some peculiarities (of dialect we may suppose) in the languages of tribes dwelling in remote situations that render them not easily, if at all, understood by each other.* Several individuals, particularly G. A. Robinson and his colleague, Anthony Cottrell, are able to converse with tolerable fluency in the native dialects, but I understand that no one has reduced the language to writing, which is to be regretted.

Some of the aboriginal terms have a very indefinite and extended meaning, as in the words "*cluckny*" and "*pomleh*." The former means to be, to exist, to rest, sit down or lie down, to stop, remain, dwell, sleep, and I know not how many more significations. The latter is used in a variety of ways, but more particularly where art, or ingenuity, or an exertion of power is applied to the production of anything. Everthing that has required any sort of manipulation has been *pomleh*, i.e., made, or put together, or called into existence.

It is also remarkable that the aborigines have hardly any general terms. They have not even a term to represent "trees" or "animals" generally.

Aboriginal Song sung by the Women in chorus, by various Tribes of the Natives of Van Diemen's Land.

Nikk̄h ninḡh tibr̄h	nick̄h	mōll̄ygā pōll̄ylā...
The married woman	hunts the kangaroo and wallaby...	
Nāmū	rykēnn̄h trēhgānā ..	
The emu	runs in the forest ...	
Nābēh thinn̄nn̄h	trēhgānā.	
The boomer (kangaroo)	runs in the forest.	
Nēhnān̄h kēhgrēunā...	n̄ynābythinn̄h...	
The young emu...	the little kangaroo...	
tr̄inḡh gūgḡerrā...	p̄yāthian̄h...	
the little joey (sucking kangaroo)...	the bandicoot...	
n̄ynābythinn̄h-kōōbr̄yn̄h...	mār̄h tērrēnn̄h...	
the little kangaroo-rat...	the white kangaroo-rat....	
p̄yāthinn̄h pūngōōthinn̄h...	lōōkōōthinn̄h...	
the little opossum...	the ringtailed opossum...	
m̄ytōpp̄yn̄h...	tr̄yn̄ōōn̄h...	
the big opossum...	the tiger-cat...	
wāthērrūnginnā...	mār̄h būnnā...	
the dog-faced opossum...	the black cat.	

* It had been stated on a previous evening (by Dr. Lang) that Van Diemen's Land had formerly been peopled with four nations, who each held a particular portion of the island. This opinion must have originated in the circumstance of his (Mr. Robinson's) having stated that he had necessarily learned four languages in order to make himself understood by the natives generally. But, as regarded nations, he could truly say that the island of Van Diemen's Land was divided and subdivided by the natives into districts, and contained many nations. Their divisions he intended at some future period to point out, as he intended to execute a map of the island on aboriginal principles, with the aborigines' names for the mountains, rivers, and localities. Maria Island and Tasman's Peninsula had also been inhabited; but the different tribes spoke quite a different language; there was not the slightest analogy between the languages.—*Report of the Public Meeting held on October 19th, 1838, at Sydney, containing the speech of G. A. Robinson: Reprinted from the "Colonist" of 31st October, 1838: Bath, 1835, p. 3.* In another place Mr. Robinson states that he had become acquainted with sixteen tribes.

A popular song among all the aboriginal tribes, of which I have not obtained the meaning, it being involved by them in some mystery—

Pöppylä-rēnūng—onnynā—Pöppylä, &c., Pöppylä, &c., &c.

lēmīngānnā—lēmīngānnā—lēmīng, &c.

Tāukūmmīngānnā—Tāukūmmīngānnā, &c., &c.

Nynā tēpē rēnā pōnnynā—Nynā, &c., Nynā, &c.

Nynā nārā pēwilly pālāwōō! Nynā nārā, &c., Nynā nārā, &c.

Nārā pēwilly pālāwōō! pālāwōō!

Nynā nārā pēwilly pālāwōō! pālāwōō!

Nynā nārā, &c. Nynā nārā, &c., &c.

[In Milligan's Vocabulary this song, with certain differences, is given. It is there entitled "Aboriginal Verses in honour of a Great Chief," sung as an accompaniment to a native dance or Riawé.—*Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania, Vol. III., p. 273.* Also by Davies, with other variations—*Tasmanian Journal, II., p. 411,* 8th December, 1833. Thos. Wilkinson, the Catechist,

has attempted the translation of the first three chapters of Genesis, and has succeeded as well as could have been anticipated. It is extremely difficult to come at the idiom, as every tribe speaks a different dialect, it might also be said a different language, and even among the individuals of the same tribe a great difference is perceptible. The pronunciation is very arbitrary and indefinite. The literal translation is confined in great measure to the verbs and the nouns. It is not clearly ascertained whether prepositions and conjunctions or anything analogous to the expletives in use with us are contained in the aboriginal tongue. T. W. has composed a considerable vocabulary of words."

"December 10.—Thos. Wilkinson's Translation of Genesis, I.

1. In the beginning God created the heavens
trōteh Gōdneh pōmleh hēāvenneh
and the earth.
cō-entānnēh.

2. And darkness was upon the face of the deep.
lywērreh cräckny.

3. God said, Let there be light, and there was light.
Gōdneh kāny, trytīttyeh - trytīttyeh cräckny.

4. And God saw the light that it was good.
Gōdneh lāprē trytīttyeh - nārreh cōōpeh.

5. God divided the light from the darkness.
Gōdneh dyvīdneh trytīttyeh lywērreh.

11. God said, Let the earth bring forth grass,
Gōdneh kāny, coentānnēh ningīnnēh rōthīnnēh,
and it was so.
tībreh.

16. God made two great lights the greater light
Gōdneh pōmleh cāthehbyweh trytīttyeh lāckrenneh
to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the
wākehlēnnēh, tywērreh [moon]:
night: he made the stars also.
nārreh pōmleh pūllennēh.

17. God set them in the firmament of heaven
Gōdneh prōpre nārreh wyehticketteh
to give light upon the earth.
trīngīnnēh trytīttyeh.

21. And God made great whales, and every living
Gōdneh pōmleh lāckrenneh [great], pynūngynēh
creature that moveth which the waters brought
[fish] gādyeh [plenty] pynūngynēh.
forth abundantly.

25. And God made the beast of the earth,
Gōdneh pōmleh pāckilleh [bullock] illa [brush
kangaroo],
and he saw that it was very good.
Gōdneh lāpreh nārreh cōōpeh.

26. And God said, Let us make man in our own image,
Gōdneh kāny, myneh pōmleh wibeh,
after our own likeness.
likeh myneh.

27. So God created man in his own image.
Gōdneh pōmleh wibeh likeh nārreh.

31. God saw everything that he had made,
Gōdneh lāprē gādyeh nārreh pōmleh,
and behold it was very good.
nārreh kāny nārreh cōōpeh cōōpeh!

The aboriginal words are for the most part placed under the analogous English ones. Those commencing with an English syllable are such as the aborigines have none representing the idea in their own language. Thus, they seem to have had no idea of the existence of a creative presiding power, nor any term corresponding with such a sentiment, in their vocabulary. The English word has, therefore, been adopted by the translator with the native termination added, making "Gōdneh." The same with respect to several others. Several of these anglicised terms are now in such constant use among the natives that they may be considered as incorporated in the language. The word "grassneh," for "grass," is much more frequently used among those at the settlement than the original term given above. It is doubtful whether "myneh," for "me" or "I," may not be traced to the same origin.

Names of Aborigines.

Men.

Women.

Tōbēlāhngtā and Rōōmēhtymyēunnā,
Chief of Oyster Bay Tribe and his wife.

Mōnnōpēllātā and Mēllōnnēhmētītā,
Chief of Big River Tribe and his wife.

Trōōlpānēh and Lēgēhuymīnnēh,
Chief of Port Dalrymple (and Launceston) Tribe
and his wife.

Trygōōmypōōnānēh and Rōōmtyēnnā.

Pānnēhrōōnēh and Pēllōnnymyēnā.

Kōōnēhbōōnēh and Mynālātītīnēh.

Lābrēhnyānāy and Mymēhlānnēhnyānāy.

Rōōlpānēhnēh, a great warrior of the tribe.

Trēngērēhbeh } Young men of the Port Dalrymple
Lillēhlōēh } Tribe.
Wāwāy }

Rāmēhlāōōnēhnēh,
Munro's woman, 'Jumbo.'

Nōtēhkhēhprēnnā.
Wāthylācōtēh.

SOME NOTES ON THE TRIBAL DIVISIONS OF THE ABORIGINES OF TASMANIA.

BY JAMES B. WALKER.

THE estimates of the aboriginal population of Tasmania before the advent of Europeans vary very considerably. G. A. Robinson always maintained that, in 1804, the number of the aborigines was from 6000 to 8000. Captain Kelly, in his evidence before Colonel Arthur's Committee in 1830, estimated the native population at 5000; but he supposed that the number was still very great in the unsettled parts of the colony, which we now know was not the case. On the other hand, Backhouse put the number as low as 700 to 1000. Dr. Milligan says: "Assuming that the number of tribes and sub-tribes throughout the territory was about twenty, and that each mustered, of men, women, and children, 50 to 250 individuals, and allowing them numbers proportioned to the means of subsistence within the limits of their respective hunting-grounds, it does not appear probable that the aggregate aboriginal population did materially, if at all, exceed 2000."

A like uncertainty exists as to their tribal divisions. G. A. Robinson, in a speech made in Sydney in 1838, shortly after he had left Flinders Island, states "that he had necessarily learnt four languages to make himself understood by the natives generally. But, as regarded nations, he could truly say that the island was divided and subdivided by the natives into districts and contained many nations. Their divisions he intended at some future time to point out, as he intended to execute a map of the island on aboriginal principles, with the aborigines' names for mountains, rivers, and districts."

Unfortunately, this map—if ever made—has been lost with the rest of Robinson's papers on the natives, and the information available is not sufficient to enable us to determine with any accuracy either the total number of the aborigines or the limits of the respective tribes.

In considering the question of their numbers, it must be borne in mind that the parts of Tasmania capable of affording subsistence to a hunting people were limited in area. The West Coast is shut off from the Centre and East—for long the only settled parts—by a wide region of mountain and forest, extending throughout the whole length of the island. In the dense forests covering a large part of this region, the heavy timber is tangled with an almost impenetrable undergrowth, in which scarcely any animal or bird is found to disturb the silence. Where the forest gives place to bare mountain peak or to so-called "plain," the "button-grass" or the stunted scrub constituting the sole growth, is not much more favourable to animal life. In places, wallaby and kangaroo are to be found, but, as a general rule, the "badger" (*i.e.* wombat) is the only game. It will be seen, therefore, that the native population was mainly confined to the sea coast, where they could obtain an abundant supply of shell-fish and crayfish, and to the lightly timbered and open lands of the central valley and of parts of the east and north-east, where opossum, wallaby, kangaroo, emu, and other game were more or less plentiful.

It appears that the blacks were accustomed to take considerable pains, by means of periodical burnings, to keep down the scrub and promote the growth of grass on their favourite hunting-grounds. Many open plains, especially in the north, which were formerly known as favourite resorts of the blacks, subsequently became overgrown with forest through the discontinuance of these annual burnings.

They usually roamed the country in small groups or parties, probably composed of nearly related families living together. Their camps rarely contained more than 30 or 40 individuals—men, women, and children. At certain seasons of the year, however, large hunting parties were formed, in which the whole tribe, or possibly more than one tribe, joined forces to surround and drive the game. Such was, doubtless, the gathering of the Oyster Bay natives at Risdon in 1804, which was attended with such an unfortunate result. The number of natives, men and women, then engaged in driving the kangaroo was variously stated at from 300 to 500, though it is probable that even the smaller number was an exaggerated estimate. Captain Kelly, in his evidence before the Committee, says that he saw a mob of 300 at Brown's River in 1806, and about a dozen instances of mobs numbering from 150 to 300 are reported between 1804 and 1826; but all these statements must be taken with considerable allowance for exaggeration.

The natives were in the habit of visiting the coast in the winter, it is said between June and October, though some of the tribes in the interior may not have had access to the sea. Certain tribes must have lived on the coast almost constantly. Knopwood says that he had understood that the natives cross the country from east to west in the month of March; this would apply to the East Coast tribes only. Upon a consideration of the scanty available evidence and all the surrounding circumstances, we may reject as exaggerated the conjectural guesses of 7000, or even 5000, as the original number of the natives. We may accept, as the best approximation to the truth that we are likely to obtain, Dr. Milligan's more moderate estimate that the total aboriginal population of Tasmania did not at any time exceed 2000 souls.

Of the tribal organisation of the aborigines practically nothing is known, and the limits of the tribal divisions cannot be laid down with any approach to certainty. G. A. Robinson and other writers use the word "tribe" with a good deal of laxity. Sometimes it is used to designate a small sub-tribe living in one community—*e.g.*, the Macquarie Harbour tribe, numbering 30 souls only—sometimes to indicate a whole group—*e.g.*, the Oyster Bay and Big River tribes, which included several sub-tribes and a considerable population. As the whole group in some cases took its name from a prominent sub-tribe (*e.g.*, Oyster Bay) it is often doubtful whether the group or the sub-tribe is intended.

G. W. Walker says that the members of the same "tribe" spoke of each other as "brother" and "sister." Kelly, in his Boat Expedition, 1815-16, says that the chief, Laman-bunganah, at Ringarooma Point on the North-East Coast, told him that he was at war with his "brother" Tolo-bunganah, a powerful chief at Eddy-stone Point, on the East Coast. The term translated "brother" must therefore have had a wide application, being used with relation to tribes or sub-tribes which were hostile, as well as to those which were friendly.

In 1830, Robinson stated that he had been in communication with sixteen "tribes." As this was long after many of the native hunting-grounds had been invaded by the whites, and the original tribal organisation had consequently been much disturbed, it is probable that the number of tribes was originally greater. As we have seen, Milligan conjecturally puts the number at twenty. Although Robinson dignifies the tribes with the name of "nations," they were known to the settlers

* The "button-grass" is a species of sedge (*Gymnoscoenus sphaerocephalus*—Nat. Ord. *Cyperaceae*).

by the designation of "mobs." This conveys a more correct idea of their numerical strength, which in many tribes was as low as 30, and probably in no case exceeded 200, or at most 250.

These "mobs" or sub-tribes group themselves into several broad divisions, more properly deserving the name of "tribes." In these larger divisions separate languages or dialects were spoken, the vocabularies of which were widely different, as appears from Milligan's Vocabulary. Minor differences of dialect must have been numerous, for Robert Clark, the catechist, states that on his arrival at the Flinders' Settlement in 1834, eight or ten different languages or dialects were spoken amongst the 200 natives then at the establishment, and that the blacks were "instructing each other to speak their respective tongues."

Robinson, as already cited, says that there were four main languages. Of these Milligan gives us the vocabularies of three; viz.:—(1) South; (2) West and North-West; and (3) East Coast. To these we may add (4) North-East tribes.

We may now proceed to consider these four main groups more in detail.

1. SOUTHERN TRIBES.

"Tribes about Mount Royal, Bruné Island, Recherche Bay, and the South of Tasmania."—*Milligan's Vocabulary.*

These tribes occupied both shores of D'Entrecasteaux Channel and the coast of the mainland as far as South Cape. The French voyagers in 1792, and again in 1802, had opportunities of observing these natives in their primitive state. They found them friendly and well-disposed. Labillardière and Peron have preserved many interesting particulars respecting them. In the more southerly part of the district the mountains, heavily wooded, nearly approach the shore, and here the blacks must have been mainly dependent on the sea for their food. Further north, towards the mouth of the Huon, at Port Cygnet, North-West Bay, and North Bruny, the country was more open and favourable for game. The banks of the Upper Huon were too heavily timbered to afford much subsistence. The Bruny blacks were numerous, especially on the lightly wooded northern part of the island, which was a favourite hunting-ground. It seems to have been visited by the mainland natives, who crossed the channel in canoes. The natives were numerous on the west bank of the Derwent—at Blackman's Bay, Brown's River, &c. At the latter place 300 were seen in 1806. In all this country wallaby, kangaroo, and opossum would be fairly plentiful. It cannot be determined how far these tribes extended to the northward. They may possibly have occupied the present site of Hobart, and even further up the western shore of the Derwent, but it is also quite possible that this country was claimed as a hunting-ground by the Big River tribe. There is nothing in the features of the ground to forbid either alternative, and there is no evidence to decide the point. Kelly (Evidence, Aboriginal Committee) says that the Southern natives were a finer race than those in the interior, and also that they "took no part" with the latter.

2. WESTERN TRIBES.

"North-West and Western Tribes."—*Milligan's Vocabulary.*

The natives on the west of the island must have been mainly confined to the sea coast, where they could draw

their support from the sea, the country inland being generally unsuitable for game. Kelly, whose boat voyage was made at midsummer, 1815, found natives at various places all along the coast, from a point opposite the Maatsuyker Islands off the south coast to beyond Cape Grim in the north-west. From the nature of the country we may conclude that those to the east of South-West Cape belonged to the Western tribes rather than to the Southern group established at Recherche Bay. They were bold enough to cross to the Maatsuykers, which lie three miles out from the main, for Flinders in 1798 noticed with surprise that the scrub on the largest island had been burnt. There was a small tribe at Port Davey, and another at Macquarie Harbour, which (according to Stokes and Backhouse) numbered some thirty souls only. The latter had canoes of bark in which they crossed the harbour. They made an attack on Kelly's party.

At Trial Harbour, near Mount Heemskirk, there are very large extensive shell mounds. Further north, on the Pieman and Arthur Rivers, there were either one or two tribes, probably near the coast, though here there are occasional tracts which would support game. In 1832 Robinson speaks of four tribes, numbering collectively 100 souls, between Port Davey and Cape Grim. It is not clear whether he meant to include the Cape Grim natives. The latter were a strong and fierce tribe. In 1815 Kelly fell in with a mob of 50 on the largest of the Hunters' Group, i.e., Robbins Island. They made a fierce attack on his party. It is said that the natives visited all the islands of the Hunters' Group by swimming, no doubt with the help of logs or canoes. They probably reached Albatross Island, seeing that they had a name for it, *Tangatema*. Though the mainland is in many places densely timbered, there are open downs at Woolnorth and other spots where game would be fairly plentiful.

There were tribes at Circular Head and at Emu Bay. Most of the hinterland was covered with dense, almost impenetrable, forest, but the high downs of the Hampshire and Surrey Hills and Middlesex Plains were favourite resorts. Other patches of open country at intervals would probably afford to these tribes the means of inland communication with their kinsmen on the west, as well as the more circuitous route by the coast. These open spaces were formerly more numerous, being kept clear by burning. Many of them have become overgrown with timber since the removal of the natives.

Hobbs (Boat Voyage, 1824) says that the natives travelled along the coast between Circular Head and Port Sorell, keeping the country burnt for that purpose. This group of tribes may possibly have extended as far east as Port Sorell, though the Port Sorell blacks were more probably connected with the Port Dalrymple tribe.

Kelly (Evidence, Aboriginal Committee) states that the West Coast natives were a finer race than the tribes in the interior, and had no intercourse with them. The southern and western groups appear to have been quite isolated from those on the eastern side of the island.

3. CENTRAL TRIBES.

"Tribes from Oyster Bay to Pit-water."—*Milligan's Vocabulary.*

The interior and eastern parts of the island were occupied by two powerful tribes—the Oyster Bay and the Big River. Their northern boundary may be roughly described as an irregular line beginning on the East Coast south of St. Patrick's Head, passing along the ranges to the south of the South Esk River to a

point at St. Peter's Pass (north of Oatlands), and thence to the Great Lake. It was these two tribes who were the most implacable enemies of the settlers, and it was against them almost exclusively that Colonel Arthur's "Black Line" operations were directed.

(a)—*The Oyster Bay Tribe.*

The Oyster Bay tribe or group of tribes occupied the East Coast, and extended inland to the central valley. They took their name from Oyster Bay (Great Swanport). The long extent of coast, following the inlets and peninsulas from north of Schouten Main (Freycinet's Peninsula) to Risdon on the Derwent, abounds in crayfish and in oysters and other shell-fish, affording an abundant supply of their favourite food. On the East Coast the hills lie some distance back from the sea, and the country yielded a supply of game. Here the natives were numerous, especially at certain seasons. It is said that as many as 300 have been seen in one mob. Robinson mentions two tribes on the coast—the Oyster Bay proper and the Little Swanport tribes. Their canoes were seen at Schouten and Maria Islands. The latter was a favourite resort, and here Baudin's expedition (1802) fell in with a large mob, who showed themselves decidedly hostile. Marion came into collision with them at Marion Bay in 1772. They roamed as far south as Tasman's Peninsula, resorting to a spot near Mount Communication to obtain "flints." Tribes belonging to this group occupied the country behind the East Coast Tier—Eastern Marshes, Native Plains, and Prosser's Plains. They were numerous in the Pittwater district—comprising Coal River and Richmond, Sorell, and South Arm. Mobs of 100 were seen at South Arm and also at Kangaroo Point (opposite Hobart), and 300 at Risdon, in 1804. To this same group of tribes doubtless belonged the natives who occupied the fine hunting country in the Jordan Valley, about Bagdad, Green Ponds, and Lovely Banks, towards the great central divide. The names Hunting Ground, Native Corners, Native Hut River, and others, indicate some of their ordinary resorts. Brodribb (Evidence, Aboriginal Committee) says that the eastern natives did not go further west than Abyssinia, near Bothwell.

(b)—*The Big River Tribe.*

The country to the west of the Central and Jordan Valleys was occupied by the Big River tribe. They took their name from the Big River, the early name of the river, now known as the Ouse. They occupied the valley of the Derwent,—with its tributaries, Ouse, Clyde, and Shannon,—and the elevated plateau of the Lake Country, 2000 to 2500 feet above sea level. They travelled westward to Lake St. Clair and Mount King William, and probably still further west beyond Mount Arrowsmith. All this district abounds in game—kangaroo, wallaby, and opossum. At Split Rock (near the Great Lake), at the London Marshes (near Marlborough), and at the Native Tier, on the River Plenty, they found stone suitable for their rude implements. From the great central plateau they seem to have made descents into the district between Bothwell and Oatlands. We cannot determine the boundary between them and their eastern neighbours, the Oyster Bay tribes. Brodribb (Evidence Aboriginal Committee) says that he considered the Oyster Bay and Big River natives were one tribe, though the eastern natives did not go further west than Abyssinia. When harried by the whites the two tribes made common cause against the strangers, and

finally the Oyster Bay natives took refuge in the Lake Plateau, where Robinson captured them, not far from Lake St. Clair or Mount Arrowsmith. It cannot, however, be concluded that they were not originally distinct tribes. They were hostile to the Northern tribes. Gilbert Robertson (Evidence Aboriginal Committee) states that either the Stony Creek or Port Dalrymple natives had killed many of the Oyster Bay natives.

4. NORTHERN AND NORTH-EASTERN TRIBES.

There remain to be considered the tribes of the North and North-East. The language of the Ben Lomond tribe is described as a distinct dialect by Kelly, Walker, Backhouse, and others. Kelly (Boat Voyage, 1815) states that Briggs, the sealer, could speak the language of the North-East Coast tribes fluently. We may infer that this was the fourth language of which Robertson speaks, and it may have been common—with more or less variation—to the North-East Coast and Ben Lomond natives. It is difficult to determine the relationship of the tribes of the North Centre, the Port Dalrymple, and the Stony Creek tribes. The balance of probabilities inclines us to the belief that they were related rather to the North-Eastern group than to their Southern neighbours of the Oyster Bay tribe (with whom we know they were at feud), or to the tribes of the North-West. There is no mention of these tribes using canoes.

(a)—*The Stony Creek Tribe.*

The pastoral district now known as "The Midlands," lying in the centre of the Island, to the north of the Oyster Bay and Big River natives, was occupied by the Stony Creek tribe. They took their name from a small southern tributary of the South Esk, near Llewellyn, to the north of Campbell Town. They occupied the Campbell Town and Ross districts, going south to Blackman's River, Salt Pan Plains, and Antill Ponds, and up to the foot of the Western Mountains, probably including the valleys of the Macquarie, Isis, and Lake Rivers. A mob of 200 were seen on the Macquarie River in 1819. It is stated that about 1829, under their Chief Eumarrah, they frequented Norfolk Plains on the Lake River. If so they must have been allies of the Port Dalrymple natives. The country they occupied abounded in game, being lightly timbered and well grassed. They had excellent "flint" quarries at Stocker's Bottom and Glen Morriston, to the south-east of Ross. In the Tasmanian Museum there is a fine collection of stone implements procured at Glen Morriston by the late Mr. Scott. It is said that the Oyster Bay natives also obtained "flints" from the same localities. The Stony Creek natives were a strong tribe and gave much trouble to the settlers. Part of their district was included in the "Black Line" operations.

(b)—*The Port Dalrymple Tribe.*

The country to the north of the Stony Creek natives—including the neighbourhood of Perth, Evandale, Launceston, the North Esk, and probably both banks of the Tamar—was occupied by the Port Dalrymple tribe.* They are said to have mustered in large numbers on various occasions. Once 200 of them proceeded from the neighbourhood of Launceston, by way of Paterson's Plains (Evandale) to the Lake River.

* The settlements on the Tamar were at first known under the name of Port Dalrymple.

Native Point, near Perth, a favourite haunt. Here they got stone for their implements. They probably roamed westward as far as Longford and Westbury, if not further. The districts they occupied are some of the finest in Tasmania; in its native state, a well grassed country with abundance of game. Their relation to other tribes is uncertain. They appear to have been in league with their Southern neighbours—the Stony Creek natives—and were, probably, also related to the North-Eastern group. The tribes as far as Port Sorell, and even as far as the Mersey, may have belonged to this group. But there is no evidence to show how far to the eastward the North-Western group of tribes extended. Possibly, the boundary may be placed in the forest country on the west bank of the Mersey. But it is uncertain to which group the Mersey and Port Sorell natives belonged. The evidence of language is not of much assistance. The Tamar was *Ponrabbell*; the Mersey was *Paranapple* or *Pirinappl*. The variation is hardly sufficient to establish either difference or consanguinity.

Kelly (Evidence Aboriginal Committee) states that the tribes of the North and East take part with the tribes in the interior. He probably means that the Port Dalrymple natives (North) were in league with those of Stony Creek; and the Oyster Bay natives (East) with those of the Big River.

(c)—*The Ben Lomond Tribe.*

The Ben Lomond natives occupied the fertile valley of the South Esk, abounding in game. Their neighbours to the west were the Stony Creek tribe. They may have had access to the sea coast at Falmouth, by St. Mary's Pass, though this was a dense forest. They took their name from the great Ben Lomond range, rising to an elevation of over 5000 feet. The valleys of the mountain were probably too densely wooded to afford much game, but that they roamed over the highlands is shown by their having given the name of *Meenamata* to the lagoon on the plateau at the summit of the mountain. Perhaps the strongest proof of the separateness of the North-Eastern tribes—or, at least, that of Ben Lomond—

is afforded by the variation in the word for "river." The South Esk was *Mangana kenta*. Elsewhere the word was *linah*; e.g., Huon, *Tahané linah* (South); Jordan, *Kutah linah* (S. interior).

(d)—*North-East Coast Tribes.*

We find mention of tribes or sub-tribes along the whole stretch of coast from George's Bay, on the East Coast, to the entrance to the Tamar (Port Dalrymple), on the North. On various occasions mobs were met with at George's Bay and George's River; at the Bay of Fires and Eddystone Point; at Cape Portland, in the extreme north-east; at Ringarooma Point; at Foresters River; at Piper's River; and on the east side of the mouth of the Tamar. In 1806, a mob of 200 natives came to the first settlement at George Town, just within the entrance to Port Dalrymple, on the east bank of the Tamar. In the north-east part of the island the country is, in many places, open for some miles inland from the coast, and in such places there would be game. The interior is mountainous and heavily timbered, and, very probably, was not occupied by the natives.

In conclusion, to sum up the result of our enquiry, we find, (1) That the aboriginal population probably did not exceed 2000: (2) that there were four main groups of tribes; viz.—(a) South; (b) West and North-West; (c) Central and East; (d) North and North-East: (3) that these groups were divided by strongly marked differences of language: (4) that the Southern and Western tribes were completely isolated from those on the eastern side of the island, and that a similar separation existed between the North and North-Eastern tribes on the one hand, and those of the Centre and East on the other: (5) that within the groups each tribe and sub-tribe probably occupied a definite district which was recognised as its special territory: (6) that the tribes within each group, though generally leagued together, were at times at feud with each other: (7) that in later years, after the European occupation, the tribes—especially those of the east and centre of the island—laid aside their differences, and made common cause against the white intruders.