

ART. XI.—*The Bora of the Kamilaroi Tribes.*

By R. H. MATHEWS,

Licensed Surveyor.

(Communicated by Professor Baldwin Spencer).

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The Bora at Tallwood.—In March, 1895, I heard that the aborigines were mustering near Tallwood Station, on the Weir River, Queensland, for the purpose of holding a Bora. By corresponding with residents of the district, I learnt that, owing to the very dry weather, great delays arose in gathering the various tribes who intended to be present. In June, fearing to put off my visit any longer, lest the ceremonies should be commenced before I got there, I started for the scene of the Bora. This journey was accomplished by going 350 miles by railway to Narrabri, and thence by stage coach 150 miles to Mungindi, a small town on the boundary between New South Wales and Queensland. At Mungindi I obtained a horse and sulky and drove an additional distance of 55 miles to the aboriginal camp on the Tallwood run, making a total distance of upwards of 550 miles. The only people then assembled at the Bora ground were the local Tallwood tribe and the contingents from Kunopia and Welltown respectively.

After I had pitched my camp, I entered into conversation with the head men, some of whom were known to me, having been acquainted with them when surveying Crown lands in that part of the country in 1875 and 1876. I had been kind to them in those days, while listening to their legends and their songs, and studying their wonderful class system*; and when I met them now I found their friendship of the greatest value to me. On my showing them that I knew their Bora secrets, they received me as one of the initiated, and admitted me to all their secret meetings.

* See "The Kamilaroi Class System of the Australian Aborigines," Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc. Australas., Qld. Beh., x., 18-24.

I was disappointed on learning from these natives that some of the most distant tribes had not yet arrived, although weekly expected, and that the final ceremony could not take place until they came. I then determined to wait at the camp a few weeks in the hope of their arriving within that time, and at once set about taking measurements and drawings of the circles and the pathway connecting them, the warrengahlee, and as much of the yammunyamun on the trees and on the ground as I considered necessary. The position of the main camp and its surroundings were also noted.

I spent the greater part of my time with the head men, asking them to fully describe every part of the ceremonies, which I took down in detail in a note-book which I carried for the purpose. On several occasions I took about a dozen of the initiated men, and one or two of the chiefs, with me into secluded parts of the forest, a mile or two from the camp, where I got them to reproduce most of the several parts—mimic performances, spectacular exhibitions, and tableaux, which are enacted in the daytime, while the novices are away in the bush with the koorungal. They also performed the greater part of the dances and plays which take place at the camp fires at night on those occasions described farther on in this paper, when the novices are brought out of their own yard for the purpose of being present at them. All the performances which were gone through in my presence agreed exactly with the descriptions of them which I had previously obtained from other blackfellows at the camp, and elsewhere in the district.

I remained at Tallwood between two and three weeks, and during this time the tribe from Goondiwindi and that from St. George, severally put in an appearance, and were welcomed in the usual manner*; but the Mogil Mogil, Gundabloui and Mungindi tribes had not yet arrived; and from letters which I had received from correspondents at the last-named place, there was no probability of their coming for another month or more, owing to the arid state of the country, and the consequent difficulty of obtaining food and water.

As I could not possibly spare the time to wait so long as that,

I returned to Mungindi, where I learnt that the local tribe were gathered on the Barwan River, not far away, and that the Gundabloui and adjacent tribes were camped at Gnoolama, on the Moonie River, about eighteen miles distant, waiting for rain to enable them to proceed to Tallwood. I therefore visited these tribes, and spent another fortnight gathering all the details I could regarding their initiation ceremonies and other customs. There I met Moogan Billy, Jack Bagot,* and other head men with whom I had become acquainted when I was camped at Mungindi in 1880, surveying that township for the Queensland Government. They welcomed me as an old friend, and cordially gave me all the assistance they could.

It was now the end of July, and there being still no rain, or any probability of the tribes referred to making an early start for the Bora camp at Tallwood, I decided to leave the district. Before starting away, I arranged with a gentleman living in the district to furnish me with the date of the arrival of the last contingent at Tallwood, and of the breaking up of the Bora camp. I also asked one of the old blackfellows, as a personal favour to me, to tell my correspondent the place where the novices were taken during their sojourn in the bush, as well as the location of the Thurrawanga camp, to which the koorungal and their charge returned. This was all the additional information I required, because I had already collected complete details of the secret ceremonies which would be conducted in the bush. My sable friend faithfully kept his promise, and from the information which he subsequently supplied to my correspondent, I have been enabled to add particulars respecting the date of the commencement of the principal ceremonies, and the position of the secret camp in the bush.

On the 1st of September a small detachment of men and women belonging to the Gundabloui, Mogil Mogil, and Mungindi tribes arrived at the Bora camp, and were accorded the usual reception. These blacks had been sent to represent the tribes to which they respectively belonged, the rest of their people remaining at Gnoolama, before referred to, as they did not care to undertake the journey to the Bora ground owing to the severe

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 321-325.

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxiv., 411.

drought then prevailing throughout the district. A few natives from Meroe also arrived at Tallwood on the same day as the Gundabloui contingent.

As the water in Redbank Creek, on which the main camp was situated, was rapidly drying up, no time was lost in proceeding with the ceremonies after the detachments referred to had arrived. Accordingly, on the 3rd of September the novices were taken away from the large ring in the manner subsequently described. The men and novices then proceeded to Gurardera Lagoon, about nine or ten miles in a west-south-westerly direction from the Bora ground. This lagoon is on Gurardera Creek, about two miles above its junction with Warrandine Creek, and was the only place for several miles around where there was water. Here a camp was formed, and a boughyard erected for the boys about eighty yards from the men's camp. A description of the shape and structure of this yard, and the general arrangement of the men's quarters, will be found in subsequent pages.

The boys were kept at this camp for nine or ten days, during which the various performances, described under the head of *Ceremonies in the Bush*, were enacted at the camp fire, and while out hunting during the day. At the end of the time mentioned, the *Koorringal* met the *Beegay* in the bush, and after the boys had been shown the bullroarer, they all proceeded to a water-hole in Warril Creek, where the *kooringal* and guardians washed themselves and camped for the night. The following morning the boys were taken to the *thurrawanga*. Details of all the matters briefly referred to in this paragraph will be given farther on. My correspondent, under directions from me, also gave me very full measurements and sketches of the *thurrawanga* camp, from which I have been enabled to prepare the description of that camp given elsewhere in this paper.

The tribes who attended the Tallwood Bora were for the most part the same people who had assembled at Gundabloui* a little more than a year before, and all belonged to the Kamilaroi community and had the same class system. The tribes from Goondiwindi and Welltown spoke Pickumbil, the St. George

people spoke Kogai, and the Kamilaroi language was spoken by all the rest; but these three dialects appeared to be mutually understood by most of the people present. There were twenty-four novices initiated, five of whom were half-castes.

Gathering the Tribes.—Messengers were despatched by the headman of the Tallwood tribe to all the people whom he wished to be present at the ceremonies. These messengers were of the Kupathin class, and totem emu, the same as their chief, and were sent to men of the same totem in the other tribes. Each messenger carried with him a bullroarer, several kilts, and other articles, and was accompanied by a novice painted red from head to foot. There was also another man with them, who acted as guardian to the novice. The formalities observed on the arrival of the messengers at a strange camp, and also on the arrival of a tribe at the Bora ground, were practically the same as previously described by me.* I was at Tallwood when some of the contingents arrived, and was present at the reception at the large ring to which the men, women and novices proceeded on their first arrival. I was also permitted to accompany the men over the sacred ground, visiting the figures of Baiamai and his female consort, the *yammunyamun*, and the imposing spectacular display at the *goonaba*, where the two old head men, having their bodies smeared all over with human blood, stood upon the *warrengahlee* while the men approached them swaying pieces of burning bark wrapped in green bushes, from which the smoke curled upwards into the air.

The General Encampment.—The camp was situated on level ground in some heavily timbered forest country on the left bank of Redbank Creek, a small tributary of the Weir River, in the Parish of Tallwood, County of Carnarvon, Queensland. This place is about four miles northerly from Tallwood, an old head station on the main road from Goondiwindi to Mungindi. The camp of the local tribe, which was the first to occupy the ground, was about seventy yards from the creek, and formed the datum point around which each of the other tribes pitched their camps on arrival. The Goondiwindi and Welltown people camped to the eastward of the local Tallwood tribe; those from St. George on

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxiv., 411-427; *Ibid.*, xxv., 318-330; and Journ. Roy. Soc. N. S. Wales, xxviii., 98-120.

* See Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 319-325.

the north-west; the people from Kunopia and Meroe on the south; whilst the Moogan, Mungiudi and Gundabloui tribe encamped on the south-west. Water for camp use was obtained from a waterhole in Redbank Creek, and game of various kinds was sufficiently abundant in the extensive scrubs to the north and west of the camp, to provide sufficient food for the people while the ceremonies lasted. From the camp to the nearest part of the Weir River was about two miles.

The total number of people of all ages and sexes assembled at the Bora camp was about 150, the greater part of whom belonged to Queensland; but the New South Wales boundary, the Barwan River, being so near, a number of the natives of the latter colony were also present.

An unusual event happened at this camp which adds to its interest. The local tribe first selected the site of the camp on the southern side of Redbank Creek, and the Kunopia contingent afterwards came and pitched to the southward of them. Before any of the other tribes arrived one of the young men of the local tribe died from some pulmonary complaint, and according to custom this necessitated a removal of the camp. As the Bora ground had then been formed, the choice of a new site for the camp was restricted to the other side of Redbank Creek in order to be near the water-hole.

The Bora Ground.—The site selected for the performance of the ancestral rites, or "Baimai's Ground," was situated in a forest of box, sandal-wood and undergrowth, about fifteen chains in a south-westerly direction from the general camp, on the other side of Redbank Creek. The soil consisted of reddish sandy loam, known among bushmen as "umah country." This kind of ground is very suitable for the purpose of forming either carved or raised figures on its surface.

In a small, naturally open space on the edge of the scrub, a large ring, 77 feet 6 inches across one diameter and 72 feet across another at right angles to it—which would give an average of very nearly 75 feet—was formed by scraping away the surface soil, which was used to form an annular mound or embankment, about eight or nine inches high, and a foot wide at the base, around the space thus cleared. An opening about two feet wide was left on one side of this bank, from which ran a narrow track

called *thunburran*, made by scraping the surface of the ground smooth and throwing the loose earth on either side. The bearing of this track was N. 62° W., and in following it in this direction for 270 yards, it was found to terminate at another and smaller circle, called *goonaba*, 47 feet in diameter, bounded by a circular bank, composed of loose earth, about five or six inches high. The track, *thunburran*, entered this enclosure through an opening in its wall similar to that in the other circle. Within this ring, and near the farther side of it, were two stumps of trees, which had been prepared in the following manner. Two small trees had been dug out of the ground by the roots, and their stems then cut through between six and seven feet from the base, all the bark being stripped from the stem and roots. These stumps were then carried to the *goonaba*, and holes were dug, into which the stems were inserted and the earth filled in tightly around them, leaving the roots at the top, some of which extended outwards about four feet, and were ornamented with narrow strips of bark twisted round them. These stumps, called *warrengahlee*, one of which was *belar* and the other *coolabar*, were twelve feet apart and five feet five inches out of the ground, the stems and roots of both being smeared with human blood. The blood for this purpose is obtained by making small incisions, with a piece of sharp flint or shell, in the arms of several men, and collecting the blood in vessels as it drips from the wounds.

Scattered over the floor of the *goonaba*, between the *warrengahlee* and the entrance of the *thunburran* (track), were a considerable number of small heaps of loose earth, each having a short stick inserted perpendicularly in the top. When welcoming a new contingent of natives, these heaps are flattened down during the ceremonies, as described by me elsewhere,* but are restored for use on all similar occasions. After the arrival of the last mob of natives who have been invited, the heaps are not again erected.

I will now endeavour to give a full description of the imagery displayed upon the ground and on the trees throughout this sylvan temple. Starting from the larger circle, which is

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 324-325.

called *boora*, and proceeding along the track it was found to enter the scrub almost at once; and at the distance of eighty-seven yards on the right hand side there was the representation of a bower bird's "playhouse," consisting of a collection of small pebbles, fragments of bone, and the seeds of some wild fruits.* Three yards farther on, also on the right, there was an effigy made by filling an old pair of trousers and a coat with grass so as to resemble a man, a bundle of something being used for the head. This figure was then propped up against a small tree and represented a white fellow.

The carvings on the soil, *yammunyanun*, commenced at the distance of ninety-six yards from the large circle, and thirty-four yards farther, close by the right side of the track, was an imitation of a bullock lying down, formed by pieces of bark covered with loose earth, having the dry bony skeleton of a bullock's head laid on one end of it, and a bent stick stuck in the other end for a tail.

At a distance of 143 yards from the starting point, on the right side, was a horizontal figure of Baiamai, outlined by heaping up the loose earth, which was one foot two inches high at the chest. The length of the figure was nine feet six inches, and the width from hand to hand nine feet. On the opposite side of the track was an image of Gooberangal, the wife of Baiamai, formed in the same way, but with the addition of a coat of kneaded clay on top in which were moulded the features of the face, the mammae and the pubes. The length of this figure was ten feet nine inches, with a distance of eight feet between the hands.

Twenty yards farther on than the preceding, on the left, was the representation of an emu with its head towards the large ring, outlined by a nick, or groove, between one and two inches deep, and about two inches wide, cut in the soil by means of tomahawks and sharpened sticks; its length from the bill to the tail being twelve feet six inches, and its height from the feet to the top of the back seven feet nine inches. The legs are short in proportion to the body, being only two feet six inches long—perhaps to indicate that the bird is sitting or crouching down.

* The bower-bird builds its nest in a tree, but forms these "bowers" or "playhouses," as they are called by bushmen, on the ground in the way described.

Three yards farther on than the emu, on the opposite side of the track, was the *Goomee* or Baiamai's fire. The loose earth had been heaped up about a foot high like a large ant-hill, on the top of which the fire was lighted. Around this heap there was a clear space about thirty feet in diameter, which was used by the men as a place of assembly when they wished to deliberate upon matters of tribal concern, as well as on the occasion of the arrival of other tribes.

Eighteen yards beyond the *Goomee*, on the same side, parallel with the track, a codfish nine feet long and three feet eight inches across the body was outlined by a nick in the soil, its head being towards the goomee. This drawing has a characteristic resemblance to some of the figures of fish which I have seen carved on rocks* on the Hawkesbury River, New South Wales.

A little farther on the same side as the preceding was the carving of a large snake, representing the *Currea*, a fabulous monster inhabiting lagoons and other sheets of water. This animal was lying parallel with the track, with its head towards the larger ring; its length was thirty-nine feet, and its greatest width about a foot.

On the other side of the track and parallel with it, opposite the last figure were two death adders formed of raised earth, their heads and tails being together, the former in the direction of the large ring. The length of each was a little over sixteen feet.

About fifteen yards farther on, on the same side, were two other figures of death adders, also formed of raised earth, with their heads in the same direction, one being nine feet long, the other ten feet six inches.

Opposite to the last two figures was a good representation of a scrub turkey's nest composed of sticks, leaves, and dirt scraped into a heap near the butt of a tree.

Ten yards farther on than the turkey's nest, or 215 yards from the large ring, near the right side of the track, was the skin of a porcupine filled with sand, having some of the loose soil piled around its feet, leaving the back exposed, a very good representation of the animal as found in the bush.

* "Rock Pictures of the Australian Aborigines," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc. Aust. (Q.)*, xl., 104-105, plate II., fig. 13.

Fourteen yards beyond the porcupine, on the same side, was an imitation of a kangaroo rat's nest, formed of grass. After another interval of fourteen yards, also on the same side, there was carved on the ground the figure of a man with a boomerang in each hand and a belt around the waist. The object, two feet five inches long, rising from the top of his head, was, the artist told me, intended to represent a feather stuck in his hair. This figure, which was at right angles to the track, with the feet towards it, bears a striking resemblance to some of the rock pictures of the aborigines of other districts, large numbers of which have been described by me in different publications.

On the other side of the track, and at right angles to it, opposite the last described figure, was the representation of a woman, cut out in the ground in a similar manner. The eyes and mouth were delineated, but the feet were omitted. The height was seven feet four inches, but would have been more if the legs had been straight.

The imitative faculties of the natives were displayed in a few drawings, copied from scenes in the life of the white man, which were intermixed with the others. At one place an attempt had been made to represent a railway train, the carriages with their windows, the numerous wheels, and the two rails on which they were running. At another place a native artist had drawn a chain like those used when working bullocks in a dray. The links of the chain were on a colossal scale, being four feet nine inches long, and one foot three inches wide. This carving was close to the raised figure of the bullock previously described. Another draftsman, apparently a poker player, had succeeded in representing the four aces. Four rectangular spaces, about two feet long and eighteen inches wide, were first made side by side to indicate four cards, and on the middle of each of these one of the aces was delineated. All the drawing referred to in this paragraph was cut out in the soil.

Besides the foregoing figures of men, animals, and other objects, there were a large number of curious designs, which the Kamilaroi and Wiradthuri tribes call *yammunyanun*,* cut into the turf. These devices commenced at ninety-six yards from the larger circle, and

terminated about five yards from the smaller one; thus covering, together with the first figures described, a linear distance of 169 yards, and extending back about six or eight feet from either side of the track. The *yammunyanun* filled up all the spaces between the other figures, the continuity being of course interrupted by the numerous forest trees and bushes growing within the space mentioned. The largest of these designs was thirty-seven feet in length, by seven feet in width; another was twenty-nine feet by five feet. Some of the smallest of these carvings were only two or three feet in length, filling out spaces between the trees. All the grass, rubbish and loose surface soil had been removed, and piled into heaps; and the earth cut out in carving, the outlines had been disposed of in a similar manner. A good deal of the surface soil thus obtained was used in building the images of Baiamai and Gooberangal already described. Owing to the great extent of ground covered by the *yammunyanun*, and the time and labour which would have been required in copying the whole of it, I selected as much as I thought would fairly represent the different patterns of native drawing as displayed on this Bora ground.

Scattered here and there along the track for a distance of about 175 yards from the *goonaba* were a number of trees marked with a tomahawk, the designs on most of which consisted of *yammunyanun*, somewhat similar in character to that carved upon the ground. Some of these trees were quite close to the track; others were eight or ten feet back from it on either side, and three of them were around outside the *goonaba* embankment.

On a forked box tree between the *goomee* and the *goonaba*, eighty yards from the latter, the crescent figure of the moon was cut through the bark, and a short distance below it were four zig-zag lines. About eighteen feet from the ground, in the same tree, was a fairly good imitation of an eagle-hawk's nest.

In another tree close by was a large bunch of boughs similar to those fixed in trees by the natives near water-holes for the purpose of concealing themselves to spear emus when the latter come to drink. This represented Baiamai's hiding place when he speared the emu.

Close to the track, sixty-five yards from the *goonaba*, was a small box tree, along the bole of which a wavy band about two

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 302-323.

inches wide had been cut with a tomahawk through the bark, and extending from the ground to the height of about twenty-five feet, representing a tree which had been struck by lightning.*

On a box tree twenty yards from the goonaba a carpet snake, nine feet four inches long, with its head towards the ground, was cut through the bark; and on a forked box tree near the porcupine, an iguana five feet two inches long was formed in the same way. Between the iguana tree and the goomee, a centipede three feet one inch long, with eighteen legs, was chopped through the bark into the wood of a box tree near the track. Below it were some diamond-shaped devices cut in the same manner.

This Bora ground, although containing all the principal figures necessary, was neither so extensive nor so richly ornamented as others I have seen. From circle to circle was only 270 yards, and the space containing the ground carving and marked trees was about 175 yards by a width of from fifteen to twenty feet. The old men explained to me that this was owing to their having been short-handed when preparing the ground, which was an entirely new site. At the Gündabloui Bora described by me in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain*, Vol. XXIV., pp. 411-427, the distance between the circles was twenty-three chains, the length of the carved ground being 320 yards, and its width forty feet.

Old blackfellows have told me that when they were boys Bora grounds were much larger and more elaborately embellished than they are at the present time. I once inspected an old disused Kamilaroi Bora ground on the Moogan Run, Queensland, where the distance from circle to circle was more than a mile. The large ring was thirty-five yards in diameter, and was still easily traceable on the ground; my guide, who was an old blackfellow, stating that when he was a young man the height of the wall was "up to his knee." The base of the wall was about eighteen inches when new. There were, of course, then no traces of the figures which had been raised or graven upon the turf, but judging by appearances, and what my guide told me, they must have extended about a mile, and their width would probably be

* A tree struck by lightning is represented in plate xxvi., fig. 13, *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, xxv., 300.

about fifty feet. In those days there were plenty of men able and willing to do the work, which was renewed and added to every time a Bora was held there.

Mr. J. Henderson, in his book, "*Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land*," published in 1832, pp. 145-147, thus refers to a Bora ground near Wellington, New South Wales:—"A long straight avenue of trees extended for about a mile, and these were carved on each side with various devices, most of which were intended to represent serpents in all their different attitudes. On the upper extremity of this the earth had been heaped up so as to resemble the gigantic figure of a human being extended on his breast, while through the whole length of this sylvan temple a variety of other characters were observed rudely imprinted on the turf. The devices on the ground bore a strong similitude to the lingen of the Hindoos.

The devices on the trees represented snakes, the opossum, the emu, the kangaroo, the cockchafer, etc., while others were stated to indicate the forked lightning, warlike instruments, and falling meteors. The evil spirit seemed to be described under the form of an eagle-hawk; an imitation of his eyrie formed a conspicuous object at the upper end of the grove. At the lower extremity of the avenue, a narrow pathway turned off to the left, and soon terminated in a circle, which was enclosed by a wall composed merely of the loose earth." In a plate appended to his work, Mr. Henderson gives drawings of some of the devices on the trees and on the ground.

The Thurrawonga Camp.—It is imperative according to ancient tribal custom, to remove the entire camp to another place after the boys have been taken away for initiation purposes.* This new camp, which may appropriately be designated the "Thurrawonga Camp," because the boughyard known as the *thurrawonga* is erected there, may be only a short distance away, or it may be several miles from the original main encampment, according to the exigencies of the case as regards food and water, or general convenience. As soon as possible after the novices have been taken away by the head men from the large ring known as the "boora," in the manner described farther on in this

* *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, xxv., 330.

paper, the women, assisted by the men who remain with them, start away to the locality which has been agreed upon.

On the present occasion, the site chosen for the new camp was on the right bank of Warril Creek, about ten or eleven miles in a south-westerly direction from the main Bora encampment, and about seven or eight miles south-south-easterly from the camp of the koorinal on Gurardera Lagoon, already referred to.

On arriving at the new site, each tribe selected their quarters on the side nearest their own country, the camp of the local Tallwood tribe being the initial point. The people obtained water from a dam in Warril Creek, about a hundred yards above the camp. Every night, by the camp fires, the mothers of the boys sang bobbarubwar songs, and the relatives and other women danced.

Down the same side of Warril Creek, 496 yards from the camp, and about two chains from the right bank of the creek, the thurrawonga was erected. Forked saplings were inserted in the ground, and rails consisting of long poles extended from one fork to another, and boughs were then piled up against the rails, to form a dense fence. The shape of this partial enclosure resembled that of a horse-shoe or segment of a circle, being twenty-seven yards across the open end—the distance from there to the back of the fence being sixteen yards. The height of the fence was about four feet, and the convex end faced in the direction from which the novices were expected to approach—the open end being towards the new camp erected by the women.

Taking away the Boys.—As soon as convenient after the arrival of the last mob of natives who are expected to join in the proceedings, the head men discuss among themselves as to the date on which the assemblage shall be broken up, and the initiation ceremonies commenced. There are several matters which have to be arranged among all the head men present before this date can be definitely settled, therefore these important deliberations, which may occupy two or three days, or may perhaps be disposed of in one, are conducted at the *Goomee*, where there will be no chance of interruption. All the people proceed to the large ring in the afternoon, and go through the ordinary daily performances,*

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 326.

after which the women and novices return to the camp as usual, and the men proceed to the *goomee*.

One of the most important matters to be disposed of is the selection of a suitable and convenient place for the establishment of the new camp, which may be called the Thurrawonga, after the tribes remove from the Bora ground. One or more of the head men of each tribe stand out in their turn and harangue the rest of the men on the subject, giving their opinions as to the situation which would be the fairest for all. As soon as the locality is decided upon, one of the men who advocate that place advances to the fire which is burning on the *goomee*, and lifts a firestick, which he throws in the direction in which the new camp is to be erected, at the same time calling out the name of the locality, which is then repeated by all present, and that matter is finally disposed of."

The hunting grounds into which the novices will be taken during the principal ceremonies of their initiation have also to be selected. As this point is so intimately connected with the situation of the new camp, the two subjects are frequently argued and decided at the same time.

Another very important matter which engages the attention of the old men is the selection of the *Koorinal*, the chosen band of athletes, who have the custody of the guardians and novices whilst the latter are going through the secret ceremonies in the bush. The old men choose the *Koorinal* from amongst all the tribes, each man selected being asked if he is willing to go; single men are generally asked, but it is not uncommon for married men to be chosen.

All these arrangements having been made, and the date fixed for the commencement of the ceremonies, some of the young men strip bark, and shape it into pieces about two feet and a half in length,† and about four inches wide at the broadest end, and two inches at the other, called Mungawan, which they place on the ground near the *goomee*, with logs of wood laid upon them to keep

* The Kamilaroi tribes on the Lower Moonie River decide the position of the Thurrawonga Camp in a different manner, and with greater formalities. Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 327-8.

† Pieces of bark similar to these were used for the same purpose at the "Burbung of the Wiradthuri Tribes." Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 308, plate xxvi., fig. 40.

them flat, ready for use. All the men then return to the large ring and dance round within it, calling out the names of places in their country, each name being received with shouts, after which they start for the camp in single file, each class of men keeping by themselves, and shouting as they go. On nearing the camp, the novices and women join them, going into their proper class positions, and all of them dance round on the cleared space near the camp, the men of each tribe again calling out the names of a few principal places in their country. The women dance outside the men, having green bushes in their hands, from which they pluck handfuls of leaves and cast them at the men as they dance past. One or more of the young men, before leaving the fire at the *goomee*, smear their bodies with ashes, and the other men tell the women that the Evil Spirit rolled those fellows in the ashes because they did not play right.

On the day preceding that on which the assemblage breaks up, soon after the return of the men to the camp in this way, two or three of them pretend to quarrel about something,* uttering loud recriminations in order to attract attention, and stand out with boomerangs and other weapons in their hands. Some of the men and women run from all parts of the camp to see what the dispute is about with the intention of preventing quarreling at the Bora meeting. This is a well-known signal to such of the women who have attended similar gatherings that the boys will be taken away the next morning. The dispute suddenly ceases and the men run through the camp repeating *Pir-r! pir-r!* and the women call out *Yah-ow!* in response. These shouts are kept up for a short time, until the whole camp becomes aware of the order to break-up. The women raise a lamentation, because they are sorry that the corroborees and daily performances are all over.

Then everybody commences to pack up, and shortly before sunset they all start for the large ring, carrying sufficient water to last them for the night and next morning, because the ring is generally some distance from the creek, river, or water-hole where the camp is situated. They camp near the ring for the night, each tribe locating themselves in the direction of their country, and the mothers of the novices sing *bobbarubwar*, and beat their

rugs at their camp fires. The men go on to the *goomee*, and select the young fellows who are to use the mungawans next morning, and then return to the large ring. At night the men dance a corroboree as usual, after which the boys lie down to rest. During the evening a bullroarer is sounded at intervals in the direction of the *goomee*. Great sexual license* is permitted between the men and women, whether married or single, on this occasion, but this liberty is restricted to those parties who would be permitted to marry each other in conformity with the class laws of the tribe. This license is not extended to the novices. Some time before daylight a number of the men leave the camp, unknown to the women, and go and remain at Baiamai's fire till the morning. These are the men who have been chosen for the *kooringal*, and it is generally some of them who are selected to use the mungawans in the large ring.

At daylight, or shortly before it, next morning the sound of the bullroarer is heard from the direction of the sacred ground, upon which the women commence to sing *bobbarubwar*, and the men at the ring raise the customary shout. Some of the men now commence to cut forks and bushes with which they put up a bough screen round outside the ring, about two feet from it, on the side opposite the track. This is done by inserting forked sticks in the ground, and laying rails from one to the other; against the rails bushes are laid, one end of the bushes resting on the ground, the other on the rails, and forming a thick screen or fence. The painting of the novices is going on at the same time at any convenient place about the camp. Each tribe paint their own boys. Say, for example, one of the novices belongs to the class *Kubbi*; a guardian is chosen for him from among the young men of the class *Ippai*. This man and his sister *Ippatha* then paint the boy *Kubbi*. He is first painted red all over with raddle and grease, and then a few white stripes are added about the face and chest, according to the pattern common to his tribe. He is also decorated with bird's feathers in his hair. A *Kumbo* and his sister *Butha* paint a *Murri* boy; a *Kubbi* and *Kubbitha* paint an *Ippai*; and a *Murri* and his sister *Matha* paint a *Kumbo* novice. As soon as all the boys are painted, they are

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 327.

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 328.

taken and placed sitting on the bank with their feet outside—the group of boys of each tribe sitting on that side of the bank which is nearest their own country, their heads being covered with rugs. The mothers of the boys are now taken and placed lying down on the ground on the other side of the bough screen—each mother being opposite to her son, with her head towards him. The other women and the children are a little farther back. Each woman lies on her side with her head resting on her hand and elbow, and her eyes looking towards the ground. When the women and children are all placed lying down, they are covered over with rugs and bushes, and a few men appointed to watch them.*

During the time that these preparations have been going on at the large ring, the *kooringal* have also been at work at the *goomee*. They have been painting the whole of their bodies with powdered charcoal or burnt grass mixed with grease, which gives them an intense black colour. The *binnialowee* are likewise preparing for their share of the work by disguising their faces and bodies with strips of bark. The *warreugabee* are pulled up out of the *goonaba* and burnt.

As soon as these arrangements have been completed at the *goomee* and at the camp, the men at the latter form a circle outside of the ring, and each man beats together two nullas, a boomerang and a nulla, a throwing stick and a spear, a nulla and a hielaman, or any other two weapons he may happen to have at hand. The distant sound of the bullroarer, the voice of *Dhurramoolun* is then heard, and one of the old men sings out: "Here he comes;" others shout out *Yooah yananga* ("go away") as if addressing *Dhurramoolun*, and the fathers of the boys pretend to be in great grief. The women and children begin to cry. A number of men from the *goomee* now quickly approach along the track and enter the ring through the opening in its wall, and run round in single file just outside the bank, all the time beating the ground with pieces of bark, *mungawan*, before described. Some of the men have two such pieces of bark—one in each hand—others have only one larger piece which they use in both hands. While these men are running round and beating the ground, but not shouting, the other men who are standing outside are beating

their weapons together and yelling hideously to make the women believe they are endeavouring to scare *Dhurramoolun* away. After the men have gone once round within the ring, beating the ground at every jump, they run away noiselessly along the track to the *goomee* and burn the pieces of bark in the fire there. Two men, one on each side of the circle, are sounding the bullroarers all this time. The guardians then advance and each one catches hold of his novice by the arm above the elbow, and bids him stand up, with his face bent towards the ground and his arms close to his side. The rug is now thrown off, and the boy is marched away by his guardian along the track. During all this time the men around the ring continue to shout and beat their weapons together to prevent the girls hearing the boys going away. These men then enter the circle and run round beating their nullas together, and at the same time obliterating with their feet, any impression which may have been left on the ground by the *mungawans*, so that the women may not see them when they get up. It frequently happens that small fragments of the bark used in beating the ground break off and remain in the ring. Some of the young men standing around carefully watch for these fragments, and carry them away immediately and put them on the fire. As soon as the *mungawan* men have gone away, some of the men standing round pick up firesticks from the camp fire and throw them into the ring, scattering the embers about.* Perhaps a few large stones are placed in the circle, dilly bags and other things belonging to the women are hung upon trees or scattered about. The men take up one or two of the little children who cannot talk yet, and put a few marks of paint on their faces or bodies. The women are told that the Evil Spirit indulged in these playful freaks when he came for the boys.

As soon as the guardians and novices are out of sight, the rugs and bushes are removed off the women and children, and they are allowed to rise. On looking round, half stupified by supernatural terror and the unexampled din caused by the men, seeing the fire scattered about and their boys gone, they give vent to bitter lamentations for a few minutes. The fathers and relations of the

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 329.

* The same thing is done at The Burbung of the Wiradthuri Tribes. Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 308 and 329.

novices, and, perhaps, other men not connected with the ceremonies, now pack up their things and start away after the boys, who have perhaps by this time gone about half-an-hour. The women, and such of the men who remain to assist them, now pack up and proceed to the place decided upon for the erection of the Thurrawonga camp, described in previous pages.

Ceremonies in the Bush.—In the meantime the guardians, *bumboon*, have taken the novices, who are now called *wundhamurrin*, away along the track, the boys heads being bowed upon their breasts, and are followed by the men with the bullroarers. On reaching a clear space near the commencement of the *yamun-yamun*, all the boys are made to lie flat on the ground, face downwards, with their arms close by their sides, and their feet towards the circle they have just left. If the ground is damp, opossum rugs are spread out for the boys to lie upon. While the boys are lying here, the men who used the mungawans have had time to put on disguises in the shape of strips of bark tied across their bodies like shoulder belts, as well as around their arms and legs, and also across their faces. Being disguised in this grotesque manner they come up quietly and stand two or three yards from the feet of the boys; the guardians are standing by the boys' heads all the time, and clap their hands on their thighs to prevent the boys hearing the men approaching. The novices are then helped to rise, and on getting to their feet they are told to turn round and look at the grotesque figures before them. These men, called *binnialowee*,* now step up quite close to the boys and commence to dance and wave their arms (*Irrumburrunga*), and shouting *birrr-r-r!* The boys now turn their backs upon the *binnialowee*, who go away to the goomee leaving the boys standing where they were. Two or three men are now seen approaching from a direction about at right angles to the path connecting the circles. Each of these men carries in his left hand a smoking stick, and in his right a boomerang, and are shouting *Ah-h-how!* and other sounds. On coming within say thirty or forty yards they rush towards the boys and throw, each, a boomerang over their heads. They do not come up to get the boomerangs again, but immediately go away in the direction from which

* *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, xxv., 331.

they came. These are the men, *buddenbelar*, who go to fetch the *beegay*, and are the same who subsequently appear in the ring of fire (*Dhurramoolungowee*), details of which will be given later on. The guardians now conduct the boys along the track as far as the goomee, showing them the *yamun-yamun* from the commencement to that point. On reaching the goomee the boys are made to turn their backs to the fire, and their eyes are cast on the ground at their feet. One of the guardians then pretends to see something in the air in the direction of the sun, and says to the novices, "Look up at that bird, you can just distinguish it in the distance." The boys all turn their eyes in the direction indicated endeavouring to see the object, until they are told to look down at some men on the other side of the goomee fire. These men, *millunga*,* are crouching down with their buttocks resting on their heels, and their elbows on their knees; they are pulling down their lower eyelids with their hands, and staring at the boys. The guardians say, "Those are *Dhurramoolun*'s men; they will come and burn you on a fire like that." The sun having momentarily impaired the vision of the boys, when looking towards the sky, they cannot see very clearly, which causes the *millunga* to appear all the more unearthly and demoniacal. Having looked at these men for a minute or two, the boys are taken about a quarter of a mile farther on than the *Goonaba*, and placed sitting on the ground with their eyes cast down. This delay is made for the purpose of allowing the *kooringal* to go ahead and get ready for the next performance, which consists of each man cutting a leafy bough, and then all crouching down close together in rank and file fashion; each man holds his bough in such a manner that none of the men are seen, nothing but a heap of bushes being visible. The novices are then brought on with their heads down, and placed standing in a row in front of the bushes, which the men keep shaking as if blown about by a gale, but no other sound is heard. The two head men who accompany the novices and their guardians then stand one on each side of the heap of bushes and one says to the other, "Can you tell me what this is?" The other man will answer, "You are older than I am; you ought to be able to tell us what it is." Perhaps a few ridiculous guesses

* *Loc. cit.*, 331.

are made. The first man then hits the ground with his nulla nulla, and calls out "Dhurraboolbool."* The koorringal then throw down the bushes and spring to their feet shouting and jumping, and swinging their arms up and down in front of the boys.

The boys are then told to hold their heads down, and are taken away to the place appointed for them to camp that night. Here the guardians make a yard of boughs, in which they place the boys. This yard consists of a partial enclosure resembling a semi-circle or a horse-shoe in shape, the width across the open end being about fifty feet, and the depth from there to the back wall about thirty-five feet, but varying in size according to the number of novices and guardians to be accommodated. Fires are lit at the entrance to afford warmth to the occupants when in it. The fence or wall is about four feet high, and is composed of forked sticks driven into the ground, with small saplings reaching from one fork to the other, and the open space between them filled up with boughs so as to form a dense fence which would serve the twofold purpose of preventing the boys from seeing what is done at the men's camp, and also to protect the boys and their guardians from cold winds. About fifty yards from the convex end of this enclosure is the camp of the guardians, and about an equal distance farther still the koorringal make their camp. Such a camp would always be near a water-hole, or close to the bank of a creek or river. About an hour before sundown a small space is cleared on the ground between the camp of the guardians and that of the koorringal. The novices are brought out of their yard, and placed standing in a row on the side of this cleared space. The koorringal now emerge from one side, and go along on their hands and feet one after the other in close succession, imitating the shape and action of grasshoppers as nearly as they can. When all the men have passed by to the other side, they turn and pass along again in front of the boys in the same manner. The two old men then interrogate each other as to what animal is meant, and one of them hits the ground with his nulla nulla and shouts "Grasshopper" (Boonboon) whereupon the men all get to their feet and jump and shout and wave their

arms as before described. The novices are then taken back to their own yard, and a few of the guardians left with them. About sundown preparations are made for the evening meal. During the day some game has been caught, which is roasted by the guardians at their own camp, and a fair share of the best parts of the meat, from which all the bones and sinews have been removed, is taken to the boys at the yard. Some of the old men go round at "feeding time" to see that the food given to the novices is prepared in accordance with tribal custom. The object of keeping and feeding the boys in a yard away from the men appears to be to prevent the former hearing any of the discussions which take place among the koorringal and guardians as to the programme of performance for each day, or any other matters which it is thought proper to keep secret from the boys. At bedtime every night the *murravan* is sounded, and the boys are brought out of this yard and sleep with the guardians at the camp of the latter. The boys are not allowed to speak, and cannot go anywhere without making signs to their guardians, who must go with them.

After supper the guardians bring the boys to the men's camp, and place them lying down with rugs thrown over them. The men then raise a peculiar shout at intervals, which is continued for an hour or two. This shouting, which is called *Bungaroo*,* is kept up for the purpose of inviting and guiding to this camp in the bush, any strange men who may have arrived at the main camp that day. Supposing that a contingent having a few novices to be initiated were a day too late, and, on their arrival, had found that the camp had broken up that morning, and that the old men had taken the novices away into the bush. The women and children of this contingent would go to the new camp and join the other tribes, but some of the men would take the novices and start out after the others. They would not come up to the camp, but would stop for the night somewhere out of sight, perhaps a mile away, at some place where there was water, and on hearing the *bungaroo* shout they would reply to it. Early next morning a few of them would approach the camp, carrying in one hand a smoky stick, and in the other a boomerang, and

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 331.

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 332-3.

uttering a series of short shouts. The koorinal, guardians and novices at the camp would then stand in a row, and the new comers would rush up near them and then retire and go away to their comrades. In a short time they would return bringing with them their novices, who are brought to the yard and put amongst the novices belonging to the koorinal, who have in the meantime been taken back from the men's camp, and know nothing of the other novices until the latter are placed amongst them. The guardians of the new boys are with them and join the other guardians, and the men who accompany them attach themselves to the koorinal.

After breakfast the men and boys start out hunting for the day. The novices are taken out of the yard, and walk beside their guardians with their eyes cast upon the ground in front of them, and their hands down close by their sides. After they have got out of sight of the camp, they come up to the koorinal, who have started before them and unknown to them. The boys are placed in a row near the edge of a thick patch of scrub, and when all is ready they are told to raise their heads and look. The koorinal come out of the scrub one after the other, imitating the appearance of flying foxes (gahmon). The old men make the usual enquiries of each other as to what animal is intended, and then one of them hits the ground with his nulla nulla and calls out "Gahmon." The boys backs are now turned towards the koorinal for a short time, when they are again told to turn round and look. They now see all the koorinal lying on top of each other in a heap called Boballai,* which I will endeavour to describe. Supposing there are twenty men in the koorinal, first about nine or ten of them would get down on the ground on their knees and elbows, as close together as they could lie; then about half-a-dozen more would lie on top of these, and the remainder on top of the second lot. A groaning noise is kept up by all the men during the time they are in the heap. Most of the positions assumed are very obscene, and some of them disgusting, but judging from the frequency with which this part is enacted, one would think that it must be of more than ordinary importance. It is perhaps intended as a moral lesson to the boys

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 333.

to deter them from unnatural offences and masturbation; or it may be that its obscenity adds to its fascination for the savage mind. After the usual enquiries as to what this is, one of the old men hits the ground and calls out, "Boballai babiabbi." The men then get up and jump and swing their arms. The boys backs are now turned, and accompanied by their guardians they walk away with their eyes on the ground for a short distance, where they are brought to a stand. The guardians then clap their hands and tell the boys to run for about twenty yards,* and stand again. The guardians now give each boy three or four nulla nullas, and they are allowed to raise their heads, and can look in any direction except behind them. Men and boys then go on looking for game, the boys being allowed to join in the sport, but if they chase a wallaby or any other animal, and it runs into the rear, they cannot follow it, even if wounded, but must let it escape. About mid-day, perhaps, they come to a water-hole where they rest and have dinner, cooking the game they have caught during the morning, after which they go in quest of game on their way back to their camp of the previous night. At some suitable place, the boys will be placed standing in a row with their heads down, and in a little while will be ordered to look up, when they see the koorinal jumping past in single file, imitating kangaroos.† Each man has a tail made of grass and reeds, or it may be of small bushes, tied up in a roll and stuck under the hinder part of his girdle, so as to represent the tail of the kangaroo.‡ They also have their hair tied into two bunches, to represent the kangaroo's ears. When the koorinal have all jumped past once, or it may be several times, the two head men ask each other what this performance means, and then one of them hits the ground as usual and calls out, "Bundar" (kangaroo). The boys are ordered to turn their backs with their heads down for a few minutes, and when they look again they see the koorinal lying on top of each other in a heap, boballai babiabbi.

* This ceremony of giving the boys a short run always precedes their liberation for the purpose of joining in the work of hunting.

† Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxiv., 423.

‡ Lieut.-Col. Collins, in his "Account of the English Colony in New South Wales," published in 1798, vol. i., p. 571, plate iii, describes a similar performance which took place at the Bora witnessed by him in 1795, at the head of Farm Cove, Sydney.

Having given their attention to this for the necessary time, the old men interrogate each other and hit the ground, calling out the name of the performance, as described previously. The men then get up and jump and swing their arms as usual. The boys are again ordered to look down and are marched away. After going a short distance they are halted, then ordered to run about twenty yards, when they are stopped again, and given three or four nulla nullas each. They are now at liberty to join in the hunting occupations of the guardians, but must not look behind them. Chasing padamelons, looking for snakes, etc., climbing trees for wild bees' nests, are now indulged in all the way back to the camp, which is reached a short time before sunset. On getting within sight of the camp the boys are ordered to hold their heads down, looking at the ground straight in front of their feet only, and are conducted in this way into the yard, where they are left in the care of a few of their guardians, while the others go to the camp and prepare their evening repast, which is brought by-and-bye to the yard. Even in the yard they must not look towards the camp of the men. After the koorungal and guardians have also had their supper and a rest, at their own camp, two or three small fires are lit, near the cleared space previously mentioned, for the purpose of giving light for the performance about to take place. The guardians now bring the novices from the yard, and place them standing in a row close by this space. The koorungal then appear with boomerangs, nullas, etc., stuck in their belts and in strings tied round their legs and round their shoulders for the purpose of holding these weapons. Some of them pretend to be lame, others are each carrying a man on their back; they catch hold of his legs and his head hangs down their back. All the men are following in a line stamping their feet, and each man has hold of the one in front of him. The rear consists of a man dressed to represent a woman, who carries a yam-stick and has a blackfellow alongside. The other men pretend to want to take the woman from him, and indulge in obscene gestures. Having asked the customary questions of each other, one of the old men hits the ground and shouts: "Goolangarra." The novices now turn their backs, and on looking round again the men are all in a heap, *boballai*, and the usual formula is gone through by the old men. The boys

are now taken away to their yard, where they remain with a few of their guardians till bed-time. The procedure for to-morrow is now discussed by the head men, the koorungal and the guardians. When this matter has been disposed of, the boys are brought back, and put in the place appointed for them to sleep, their guardians being with them, and all hands retire to rest.

The next morning at day-light the boys are taken back to their yard, where food is subsequently taken to them. When all have breakfasted, a start is made out into the bush for the purpose of hunting. It may be that it has been decided to shift their camp to a fresh place, and in that case their things would be carried by their guardians. The boys walk with their heads down and their arms close by their sides, and when out of sight of the camp are liberated by giving them a short run and handing them nulla nullas, as before described, and hunting or fishing is carried on all day as usual. During either the fore or afternoon, the pantomimic performance of the Curlew (*Graybai*) is gone through by ranging the boys in a row with their heads down, their nulla nullas having been taken from them. The koorungal then run along past in front of them, imitating the action and whistling of the curlew. The old men hit the ground and the men go in *Boballai* in the usual way. On getting into camp that evening an hour or so before sundown, the play is *Native Bees* (*Oongomurra*). Around the butt of a tree a number of bushes are placed with their ends leaning against it. The koorungal are standing round the base of the tree, hidden by the bushes and are humming like bees. The boys are brought up with their heads down, and are ranged in a row and told to look up. When an old man hits the ground with his nulla nulla, the men come out on all fours one after the other humming and imitating the walk of bees. The boys backs being now turned, the men go into *Boballai* as usual. If it is a fresh camping ground, a yard is made for the boys and the camp arranged as previously described. After supper a couple of small fires are lighted beside a cleared space, between the camp of the guardians and that of the koorungal, and the boys are brought out of their yard and placed standing on one side. The men now pass along in a crouching attitude, jumping and shaking their arms; the

front man and the last have each a piece of string one end of which is held in each hand, and the middle of the string is held between the teeth. This string is drawn from side to side, the men making a low noise with their mouth, which noise is repeated by all the other men who have no string. As soon as all the actors have passed by into the darkness on the other side, they return repeating the performance. This is done several times and when the old men think it has been continued long enough, they bring it to an end by hitting the ground and naming it Warringun.* The usual course of turning away the boys' heads for the preparation of Boballai, concludes this act, and the boys are taken back to their yard till bed-time, and are then again brought to the men's camp for the night.

Next morning the usual routine is gone through, and a start made into the bush in search of food. During the forenoon the boys are brought to a stand at one end of a heap of earth or sand, into which a number of pieces of stout grass or reeds about four or five inches in length have been inserted closely together like the quills on a porcupine. The old men make the usual interrogations as to what it is, when one of them says: "It must be a porcupine" (Wiroyla) and inserts the end of his nulla nulla under one side of the heap as if to turn it over. A man who was concealed under this covering now rolls over on his back with his legs and arms gathered up in the same way as a porcupine does when it is turned over. The men and boys then resume their hunting. On reaching the camp a short time before nightfall the pantomime of Wonga Wonga Pigeon (Googan Googan) is performed. The koorinal paint white patches on their bodies in the position on which they appear on the bird, and then walk past imitating the note of this kind of pigeon. The usual formalities ensue, and the performance ends by the men going into Boballai. That night after supper the boys are brought to the clear space at the camp, and a fire lighted. One man beats two boomerangs together. The others then dance around with sticks in their mouths; these sticks are merely dry pieces of wood, and are from eighteen inches to two feet six inches long, about the

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 334.

thickness of a whip-handle, picked up around the camp. After dancing a few minutes the men throw the sticks out of their mouths into the fire, and go and get other similar sticks. This is repeated for some time, after which all the men dance round the fire for a little while without anything in their mouths. The fire having now burnt down to cinders, the men jump upon it with their naked feet and scatter the embers in all directions and put it out. This dance is called Boodell Boodellying.

Next morning a start is made as usual, and when a short distance from the camp, the Kangaroo-Rat (Noolooboonya) is represented. The boys are placed as usual and the koorinal are seen gathering bunches of grass, which they carry in their arms and build a nest like the kangaroo-rat, only much larger. When the nest is completed, the men, one after another, go and put their heads in it, and then hop past the boys, imitating the shape and action of the animal. The men then go into Boballai, after which a fresh start is made. The boys are made to run several yards, and nulla nullas given them as before described, and all hands go on hunting. It may be that the novices are not kept together. One lot of guardians and their novices may go in one direction, and another lot may go into a different hunting ground, and these detachments may not meet again until their return to the camp perhaps an hour or so before sundown. One lot on approaching the other would whistle. When they all get together near the camp, the game of Locusts (Ngaddalla) is performed.* The boys stand with their heads down while the koorinal climb trees, and catch hold of the branches imitating the position and noise of locusts. The boys are then told to look, and in a short time the men come down from the trees and crawl along the ground past the boys, and conclude the performance by going into Boballai. The novices having been taken to their yard, and all hands having had supper, a fire or fires are lit alongside of the cleared space at the camp, and the boys brought to see the performance. The koorinal are painted in white stripes extending from the feet to the neck, with a central line from the forehead down the nose, chin and body, terminating at the end of the penis. White circles are also drawn around the

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 333.

eyes. They dance along past the fire in pairs, having hold of each others hands, the outside hand of each man resting on his hip, uttering monotonous exclamations all the time. Some of the conjurers then perform tricks of pulling things out of their bodies, and running after the other men, the whole concluding with the *kooringal* going into the heap, *Boballai*. After this, men and boys retire to rest for the night.

The following morning, after getting away from the camp, the pantomime is *Wood-Ducks*. The *kooringal* come out from one side and run with a waddling gait past the boys, quacking and falling over each other as they go. The backs of the boys are turned for a few minutes, and the men are seen in a heap, *Boballai*. The boys are marched a short distance away and liberated in the usual manner, and join the men in hunting. Some time during the day the *kooringal* go away to a place where the soil is soft, or to a sand ridge, and make a hole in the ground about two feet deep. A man with his head hideously disguised, and an opossum rug wrapped around him, is placed in the hole. The others then withdraw, and the novices are brought within twenty or thirty yards, when their attention is drawn to the strange figure, and are told that it is a man rising up out of the ground, perhaps some of their ancestors. They are then marched away, and resume their hunting.

The following appears to be a variation of the above: Two men are disguised with white stripes of brigalow bark tied across their bodies and limbs and a piece of bark strapped to the penis to give it the appearance of almost touching the ground. These men have their feet in holes about a foot deep, dug in the ground to give them the appearance of coming up out of it, and each has an opossum rug loosely thrown round him. The boys are brought within a short distance, but not too near, and are shown these figures, who are waving their arms about, and who are called *Dhandarroogan* (or *Dhungully*).

Having returned to the camp and the evening meal over, the novices are brought to the cleared space. Some of the wizards will take a stick out of the fire and will apparently bite a piece of the burning coal off one end of it. They run about clapping their hands on their hips and going through obscene gestures. During this time they will apparently bring different substances,

such as white stones, pieces of string, etc., out of their bodies. When this kind of amusement has been indulged in for some time, such of the men as are good singers commence chanting *Baiamai's* song.*

After breakfast next morning, two of the wizards go away into the bush adjacent and smear their faces, arms and bodies with human blood, taken from the arms of some of the men, and come out to where a large fire has been lit, accompanied by about half-a-dozen or more young men beating the ground with pieces of bark and shouting "*Barri-barri*" repeatedly as they walk. The two wizards referred to then chase the *kooringal* and guardians, but not the novices, round the fire several times—the bullroarer being sounded out of sight in the bush close by. The men with the bark now sit down a short distance off, and continue beating the ground; and one of the wizards stands beside them having in his hand a coolamin, out of which he drinks human blood. At the finish, all hands, except the boys, dance and shout and close in round the fire. After this the boys heads are turned away, and the *kooringal* go into *Boballai*.

When the head men consider that the novices (*Wudhamurrin*) have gone through a sufficient course of instruction and discipline in the bush, a number of strange men who have arrived at the women's camp since the boys were taken away are despatched to liberate them. These men are called the *Beegay*, and a messenger is sent out to the *kooringal* to let them know they are coming. The *Beegay* then start away from the main camp and proceed to a water-hole in the bush, which has been decided upon by the head men as the place where the *kooringal* and guardians are to wash the black paint off their bodies. At this water-hole the *Beegay* leave their personal effects in charge of a few of their own men, and go into the bush in search of the *kooringal* and novices. They know where to go, because the locality has previously been determined upon.

On the day which has been arranged to meet the *Beegay*, the *kooringal*, *bumboon* and boys start out as usual and carry all their things with them, as if shifting camp. When they reach the appointed place, which is in a piece of open country, their

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 334.

swags are laid down and a fire lit, at which the old men remain. The boys are then taken away on the pretence of accompanying the men hunting, and one or more of the koorungal go ahead unseen by the boys, in order to see where the *Beegay* are. On sighting the latter and exchanging signals that all is ready, the koorungal scouts return and inform their comrades. The boys (*Wundhamurrin*) are placed sitting on the ground in a row with their heads down, and their backs towards the direction from which the *Beegay* are to approach. The koorungal are standing in a row behind the boys. The guardians then tell them to listen, that Dhurramoolun is coming to burn them. The *Beegay*, painted with white stripes, are by this time quite near, carrying in the right hand a boomerang, and in the left a smoking stick. One of them raises a low continuous whistle, on hearing which the guardians tell the boys to get up and run back to the place where they left their swags, looking only at the ground in front of them. The boys then run as hard as they can in company with the guardians for about 200 yards, when the guardians command them to lie face downwards on the ground with their hands by their sides for a minute or two. They are then ordered to get up and run again. These spells of running and resting are continued until the temporary camp is reached, when the boys fall face downwards on rugs ready spread for them. The whistling of the *Beegay* has been heard close behind them all the way. The reason for making the boys lie down at intervals is to prevent their getting too excited and frightened, and becoming unmanageable, and also to enable the *Beegay* to keep pace with them. As soon as the boys lie down the old men, who remained there, say, "We will now give you a drink before you are burnt." After this some of the men will clap their hands whilst others take fire-sticks and touch the boys on the legs to make them believe that Dhurramoolun is commencing to burn them. The koorungal say, "Don't be in a hurry to burn the boys! go away!" The fathers of the novices are there, and pretend to be in great grief, lamenting and hitting themselves on the head; the boys are in a great state of fear, but do not attempt to move.

During this time the *Beegay* are renewing their fire-sticks, in order that they may make a good smoke. Then the boys are helped to their feet and are placed standing in a row, the fathers

of each boy saying to the guardians, "Hold my boy; he is going to be taken away and burnt." The koorungal are standing in a semi-circle behind the boys. The boys faces are now turned towards the *Beegay*, who are swaying their smoky sticks, and the guardians say, "There they are; they have a big fire over there," pointing in a certain direction. The *Beegay* then run up towards the boys dancing and shouting and swaying their smoky sticks and boomerangs. The guardians then turn the boys backs towards the *Beegay*, who come up and pass along the row of boys, each man catching the back hair of each boy in succession, and pulling his head up straight. The class distinctions are so interwoven with the ceremonial that, even in this matter, they are not lost sight of. A Dilbi* *Beegay* would shake the hair of a Kubbi or Murri boy heartily, because he belongs to the same class, but would only lightly shake the back hair of a Kumbo or Ippai; the Kupathin men would show a similar preference for the boys belonging to their own class. This pulling of the back hair is done for the purpose of freeing the novices from the stooping position in which they have had to walk during the time they have been out with the koorungal. After this, the *Beegay* retire several yards, shouting as before, the boys remaining with their backs towards them.

The *Beegay* then form into a semi-circle, and join the semi-circle formed by the koorungal, making a complete ring of men around the boys. Two men now step out into the open space within the circle and commence swinging bullroarers, and the koorungal beat their weapons together and call out, "Don't burn the boys yet." When the men with the bullroarers get giddy, they are replaced by others, who keep the instruments sounding continually. Amidst this tumultuous clamour of human voices, clashing of weapons and roar of *murrawans*, the boys faces are turned round and they are told to look. The guardians tell them that these instruments represent the voice of Dhurramoolun, and that all the similar sounds which they have yet heard have been made in this way. The men now caution the boys not to reveal what they have seen to the women, or the uninitiated, or

* "Kamilaroi Class System of the Australian Aborigines," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc. Aust.* (Q.) x., 19.

they will be punished with death. The Dilbi men caution the Dilbi boys, and the Kupathin men caution the Kupathin boys, and while doing so hold up tomahawks or spears in a threatening attitude. The guardians now put the full dress of a man on each of the novices, consisting of a belt with four barrunggals, a broad and a narrow head-band. They are now called *tuggabillas*,* and are freed from any further restraint. Some of the wizards perform feats of juggling, and this part of the ceremony is over. Up to this point the guardians have been carrying the rugs and other things belonging to the boys, but now they will have to carry them themselves. The Beegay now start for the water-hole where they left their swags, and the koorinal, bumboon and tuggabillas follow them at a distance. A few men who had been left here have made a ring (*Buddhamoor*) about fifteen or twenty yards in circumference, its boundary being formed by a continuous wood fire. In the middle of this ring of fire are two men swinging a big nulla nulla in each hand, dancing about and imitating different animals. These are the two men (*buddenbelar*), who threw the boomerangs at the boys the first morning on which they were taken away. The Beegay are the first to reach this place, and they lie down on the opposite side of the ring to that in which they have just come. Presently the koorinal, guardians and neophytes arrive at the other side of the ring and commence stamping their feet, swaying their hands, in which they carry weapons, up and down, and uttering low monotonous shouts. Then the Beegay, who are, as before stated, lying down on the opposite side of the ring of fire, rise to their feet, and act in a similar manner. During this time the two men have been in the ring, but now they retire, and the Beegay enter it, dancing round and shouting. Some of their wizards go through various feats of pulling things out of various parts of their bodies, and chasing the other men, who clap their hands on their hips and shout. These ceremonies being concluded, the Beegay drive the koorinal and the guardians into the water-hole close by, where they wash the black paint off themselves, the Beegay and the novices sitting on the bank watching them. After this the koorinal and their contingent camp at

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 336.

the water-hole for the night, but the Beegay go away back to the camp of the women, perhaps a mile or two distant.

A few of the oldest women then muster all the women and girls in the camp, not including the children, and drive them into a water-hole or creek close by, and make them swim about and wash themselves. When they come out of the water, they go and select a suitable level place near the camp, which they clear of grass and rubbish, ready for enclosing by the thurrawonga, or bough yard, the next day. The distance from the camp to the thurrawonga may vary from about 200 yards to 500 yards, according to the suitability of the ground, and other considerations.

When the koorinal and their companions have had supper, some of them take the neophytes, and proceed towards the camp of the women.* On coming within hearing, they break up into sections according to their respective tribes, each section of novices approaching that side of the main camp occupied by the tribe to which they belong. Each lot of boys is accompanied by one or more of the men, who climb up into a tree, just outside the camp, and shout, and the women know the men's voices. Then each boy shouts out in succession, and is answered by his mother. During this time one of the boys is swinging a murrawan at the butt of a tree. The women then pick up fire-sticks and hold them in their hands, or wave them in the air, or perhaps throw them up. The boys of each section act in the same way adjacent to the quarters of their mothers. The men and boys now return to their comrades at the camp out in the bush. The ceremony of giving the boys a new name is now proceeded with. This is done by the old men and the fathers of the novices. The Ippais give names to the Murri boys, the Kubbis name the Kumbos, the Murris name the Ippais, and the Kumbos name the Kubbi boys. While the boys were away at the women's camp, two men had climbed each a tree, and as each boy was named by the old men, one of these would shake the branches and shout out from his tree, imitating the noise of some animal. Sometimes they micturate in imitation of opossums and squirrels. When all the boys are named, the men who have been

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., xxv., 336.

up in the trees come down, and raise a lamentation that the bora ceremonies are over. Such of the young men present who had been initiated at previous boras now ask the old men to release them from certain prohibitions which had been imposed upon them as to food. Food restrictions are now imposed upon the neophytes.* After this all hands go to sleep at the camp fires for the night.

Return of the Boys.—Early next morning the men and boys have their hair cut, and the men are shaved, face and pubes, after which the boys are painted red all over, with white stripes drawn diagonally across their bodies from the direction of each shoulder, and also on the arms and legs. Belts, kilts, etc., are also worn. The men are painted with red stripes from the waist down to the feet, and from the elbows to the hands. Feathers of the eagle-hawk or swan are put in the hair. A messenger is sent on ahead to the gin's camp to tell them that the men and boys will shortly arrive.

The women, assisted by the Beegay, have in the early morning cut saplings and bushes, and made a yard around the cleared space before referred to. This yard is similar in shape to those made in the bush, but larger, because intended to accommodate a greater number of men. Its convex end is in the direction from which the boys are expected to approach. In this yard the mothers of the guardians and koorungal have placed their yam-sticks around, about two or three feet from the fence, each stick having some article belonging to the owner attached to it, in order that the men may recognise them. Around the outside of the convex end of this yard logs of wood are laid. The Beegay now cause the women to lie down round the outside of the yard, the mothers of the boys occupying the space nearest to the fence with their feet touching the logs just mentioned. The men and women who have charge of the thurrawonga are called *mooemalla*. The women are then covered over with rugs and bushes. On a signal being given that all is ready, the neophytes and their guardians now approach in single file, and the latter conduct each boy to his mother on the outside of the enclosure and place him sitting down on the log which her feet are

* Forbidden food is called *wanna*.

touching. The guardians and koorungal then enter the yard, and each man sits down facing his mother's yam-stick. Each novice then shakes the log to let his mother know he is there, but does not speak, and then runs away, not looking behind him, to a camp two or three hundred yards away, provided for the novices and their guardians. During this time the bull-roarer is heard in some place adjacent, but out of sight.

As soon as the boys run away, the women are allowed to get up. They then pull down the bushes forming the yard and find the men sitting there—the latter now get up and dance and make a buzzing or humming noise on the cleared space inside the thurrawonga—the women standing around. The women then take the men to some convenient place close by, where they place them in four groups, the men of each class being together, and light fires to the windward of them. Green bushes are placed on the fires to make a thick smoke. The Dilbi women smoke the Dilbi men, and the Kupathin women smoke the Kupathin men. After this the men disperse to their usual quarters. In the meantime all the neophytes have gone into their own camp accompanied by some of the men. That night the novices, accompanied by some of the men go round the women's camp, out of sight, and walking quietly so that their movements may not be heard, sounding bullroarers.

Next day the boys, carrying a smoky stick and bushes, are brought up to the women's camp, a man sounding a bullroarer behind them in some secluded spot. Several men walk behind the boys, throwing pieces of bark at them, sometimes hitting them. On reaching the women's camp the boys are placed sitting on a log in groups according to their classes. The women then light fires on which they burn green bushes on the windward side of the boys, so as to envelope them in a cloud of smoke. The Dilbi women smoke the Dilbi boys and the Kupathin women the Kupathin boys. The mothers hold the boys in the smoke.

After this ceremony, the various tribes who have attended as visitors make preparations for returning to their several districts, and in the course of a few days all have gone away. The novices of each tribe are kept under the control of their guardians for some time, and have to conform to certain rules laid down by the old men.

The Carved Trees of New South Wales

By FREDERICK D. MCCARTHY

AMONG the wealth of aboriginal relics found in New South Wales, the carved trees constitute a most interesting group. They have formed the subject of innumerable notes and photographs in newspapers and magazines, and a large number of inquiries about them are made at the Australian Museum each year. Etheridge¹ called them dendroglyphs and classified them into two series: those beside graves he termed taphoglyphs, and those on initiation grounds he termed teleteglyphs.

TAPHOGLYPHS.

The taphoglyphs mark the grave of a notable member of a tribe, such as a medicine-man, warrior, leader in ceremonies, orator or man of wisdom; sometimes the site of a combat in which there had been a death was denoted by a carved tree. Only one tree was engraved beside the majority of graves, but as many as four and five taphoglyphs at one site have been recorded. They are usually to be seen on river banks and flats, where the graves were dug in the soft earth. The orientation of the carved trees in relation to the grave is not consistent; there are records of two trees standing north and north-west of a grave, of three trees forming a triangle, and four a rhomboid. In addition there are several instances of four trees standing at the cardinal points round a grave. The trees were not given any care after the burial ceremonies were finished.

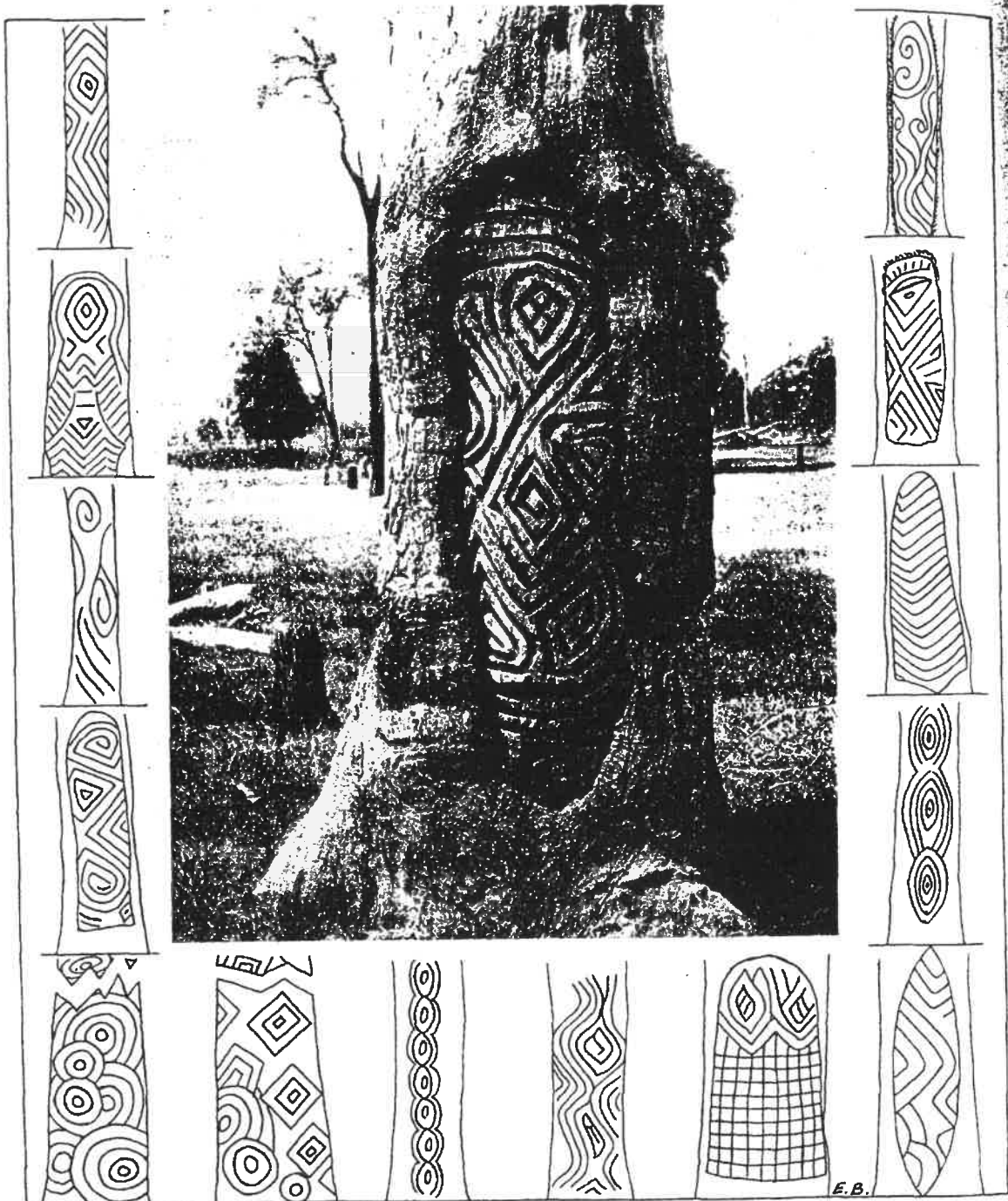
In central New South Wales the graves were of the tumulus type, in which a high mound of earth was raised above the grave, with a strip of bare soil surrounding it, and sometimes several long raised mounds along one side. The taphoglyphs were associated with these graves.

The carving of taphoglyphs was a culture trait of the Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi tribes particularly, and from them it diffused on all sides, spreading as far as the Murring tribes on the south coast of New South Wales. The centre of the practice was the area extending from the upper Macquarie and Bogan Rivers to the upper Lachlan, and especially in the Warren-Wellington district. Taphoglyphs have been recorded as far north as Gunnedah-Coonamble, and as far south as Niemur Creek and Lake Cargellico, but they are unknown along the Darling River. The southern line of their distribution coincides with that of the tumulus grave, but the latter did not spread to the south coast.

It is known that the tribal culture-heroes came down from and went back to the sky world *via* the trees, and Howitt has recorded a belief that the spirit of the dead man went to the sky world by means of the taphoglyph. An interesting example of the powers of the evil spirits to interrupt this spirit journey lies in the digging of a dummy grave with incised trees to delude them—especially Kruben, a powerful evil-doer who wandered about at night. The taphoglyphs were not worshipped nor used as idols, their significance being that the carved design was associated with the clan of the deceased and the religious background of this group.

One of the trees on exhibition at the Australian Museum was discovered by Surveyor-General Oxley on July 29, 1817. In describing the site, he said in his Journal: "To the west and north of the grave were two cypress trees, distant between fifty and sixty feet, the sides towards the tomb were barked, and curious characters were cut upon them. The grave consisted of a mound nine feet long by five feet high, with a semi-circular bank of earth half-way around

¹Etheridge, Robert, Jr.—The Dendroglyphs, or "Carved Trees" of New South Wales. *Memoir. Ethnological Series No. 3*, of the Geological Survey of New South Wales, 1918. 104 pp., 38 pls., map.



Geometrical designs carved on trees in New South Wales. The design on the example second from the top on the right probably represents a culture-hero. The specimen in the photograph is at Dubbo.