

The Arunta

THE ARUNTA

A STUDY OF STONE AGE PEOPLE

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The Arunta

CONTENTS	
CHAPTER XV	
	Pages
The Making and Power of Medicine Men ; Various Forms of Magic.....	391
<p>Three schools of medicine men – Those made by the <i>Iruntarinia</i> or spirit – Those made by the <i>Eruncha</i> – Those made by other medicine men – Ceremonies attendant upon the initiation in each case – Hole made in the tongue – <i>Atnongara</i> stones placed in the body – The medicine man must not eat fat or warm meat, etc. – Functions of medicine man – Method of treatment by medicine man – Medicine men assuming the form of eagle-hawks – Ascertaining who is responsible for the death of a man – Various forms of magic – Pointing-sticks and bones – Methods of using them – Charming a spear – “Singing” a wound – Magic associated with the hair of a dead man – The <i>Kuru-urkna</i> – Distribution of necklets, etc., made from the hair of a dead man – <i>Ililika</i>, a knout made of string used for a magic purposes – The <i>Tchintu</i>, supposed to contain the heat of the sun – Magic concerned with the procuring of wives – A man will be assisted in retaining possession of a woman by other men of his own locality – Charming by means of the <i>Lonka-lonka</i> and <i>Ulpirra</i> – <i>Fly Churinga</i> used for curing eyes bitten by flies – <i>Mauia</i>, small magic stones – Women and magic – Punishment of a man who has charmed on the ground, the emblem of a woman – Producing boils by magic – Magic connected with an emaciated emu – Various forms of magic – <i>Ratappa</i> stones – Spittle throwing – No use of hair or nail clipping for magic.</p>	
CHAPTER XVI	
Spirit Beliefs.....	421
<p>Different names given to spirits and spirit individuals ; <i>Kuruna Iruntarinia</i>, <i>Iwupa</i>, <i>Ulthana</i>, <i>Alknuriniata</i>, <i>Arumburinga</i> – Two series, one including the first four, the other the last two – Name <i>Kuruna</i> given to spirits, each of which was associated with a <i>Churinga</i> in the <i>Alchera</i> – When the original <i>Alchera</i> individual died, a <i>Knanja</i> tree or rock (<i>rola or perta knanja</i>) arose to mark the spot –The <i>Kuruna</i> returned to the <i>Pertalchera</i> and split into two, one forming a new <i>Kuruna</i>, the other an <i>Arumburinga</i>, which persisted unchanged, whilst the <i>Kuruna</i> could undergo a series of reincarnations – This belief is curiously similar to that of the <i>Kakadu</i> tribe – The <i>Arumburinga</i> watches over its double, the <i>Kuruna</i>, when the latter undergoes reincarnation – The <i>Arumburinga</i> is called <i>Alknuriniata</i>, when a man dies and it visits his grave – The spirit of a dead man is at first called <i>Ulthana</i>, until after the <i>Urpmilchimilla</i> ceremony, when it returns to its <i>Pertalchera</i> and joins the other <i>Kurunas</i> – <i>Iruntarinia</i> and <i>Iwupa</i>, general terms that include all forms of spirit beings – Beliefs with regard to the <i>Iruntarinia</i> – <i>Atua Iruntarinia</i>, men who hold converse with the spirits – <i>Iruntarinia</i> seizing men and women – They possess <i>Churinga</i> and ceremonies that they give to men – Example of one of the latter – Sometimes they tell one of the <i>Inkata</i> when to perform <i>Mbanbiuma</i>.</p>	
CHAPTER VII	
Death, Burial and Mourning Ceremonies.....	429
<p>Two <i>Inchinkinja</i> in form of stars anxious to see that ill men died – They come down when a man is dying, put a foot on his neck and pinch his throat – An <i>Eruncha</i> comes afterwards and,</p>	

The Arunta

<p>if the man tries to rise from the grave, puts his foot on his head and presses him down – The spirit, now called <i>Ulthana</i>, leaves the body in the form of a whistling bird, <i>Chichurkna</i>, and goes to its <i>Pertalchera</i> – The <i>Arumburinga</i> goes back to the <i>Pertalchera</i> and the <i>Ulthana</i> returns and hovers about until after the <i>Urpmilchimilla</i> ceremony, after which it rejoins its <i>Arumburinga</i> and is called a <i>Kuruna</i> – Old man dying – The body carried to the grave immediately – Hair cut off by the grave-side, made into a girdle, <i>Kuru-urkna</i> – The body, in sitting position, with knees doubled up, is buried facing towards his Alchera camp – The camp and everything belonging to the dead person are burnt – Restrictions on mentioning the name of a dead person – <i>Gammonas</i> must cut themselves when an <i>Irundera</i> died – Ceremony of <i>aralkililima</i>, releasing the widow from the ban of silence – Widow offers food to brothers of the dead man – I younger brother of the dead man meets the widow in the bush he may spear her – Ceremony of <i>Urpmilchimilla</i> at the grave – The widow wears a chaplet of bones called <i>Chimurillia</i> by men an <i>Aramurillia</i> by women – Procession to the grave – Spirit supposed to be driven into the grave – Women lying on the grave and cutting heads – <i>Chimurillia</i> torn up, and, together with twigs, is trampled on and then buried in the grave – The widow rubs pipe clay off – The <i>Ulthana</i> goes back to the <i>Pertalchera</i> and becomes again one of the <i>Kuruna</i> – <i>Urpmilchimilla</i> ceremony in the case of a woman – The mother the chief mourner – The body of the widow is painted white so that the <i>Ulthana</i> can see that it is mourned for.</p>	
CHAPTER XVIII	
<p>The Atinga or Avenging Party.....</p>	443
<p>Various forms of avenging parties – Two examples – Men summoned by <i>Inwurra</i> messengers – In the first case the avenging party reached a camp of the Iliaura tribe containing men whom they accused of killing their friends – The Iliaura offered women, but these were declined, showing that the visit was a hostile one – After consultation, the Iliaura agrees to assist in the killing of the culprits, who they admitted were <i>Iturka</i> – Special fire, called <i>Thara</i>, made in each camp – The victims speared at the Iliaura fire – <i>Ilkunta</i> sticks broken and thrown on the bodies – Taking the <i>Anua</i> of one of the men – In the second case the party consisted of twenty-five men – Every man is rubbed with the <i>Kuru-urkna</i> made from the dead man's hair – Blood letting, sprinkling and drinking, to ensure fealty – Dances and representation of killing the culprit – The making of a mound of earth on which is placed a stick called <i>Aworra</i>, the emblem of the victim – A special fire, <i>Indora</i>, in which the stick is burnt – Description of killing the man – Return of the party – An old woman hitting the shields of the men with a club – It they give out a solid sound the man is safe, if a hollow one, he is under the influence of evil magic – The spirit of the dead man follows them up in the form of a whistling bird, <i>Chichurkna</i> – Custom to secure the avenging of a death if this is not done by proper <i>Gammona</i>.</p>	
CHAPTER XIX	
<p>Customs of Kurdaitcha and <i>Illapurinja</i>.....</p>	456
<p>The natives have no idea of death from natural causes – The <i>Railtchawa</i> or medicine man is told by the dying man whose magic is killing him – Organising a urdaitcha party to avenge a death – Kurdaitcha shoes – Th making of a Kurdaitcha man – Medicine man accompanying the Kurdaitcha – The medicine man heals the victim by means of magical <i>Atmongara</i> stones – The Kurdaitcha man may go alone, and then uses a lizard to suck the blood from his victim – The shoes cannot prevent the tracks being seen, and are not actually used at the present time – Kurdaitcha ceremony – <i>Illapurinja</i> means “ the changed one” – Is applied to a female Kurdaitcha – Decoration of the <i>Illapurinja</i> – She carries a charmed stick and is rubbed over</p>	

The Arunta

with blood drawn from her husband – While she is away her yam stick is fixed in the ground with a tuft of <i>alpira</i> tied to it, which tumbles down if she has been detected and killed – The special object of the <i>Illapurinja</i> is to kill a woman who has not mourned properly on the death of a daughter.	
CHAPTER XX	
Methods of Obtaining Wives ; <i>Alknatinja</i> Women ; Marital Custom.....	464
Four methods of obtaining wives – Charming by magic – Capture by an avenging party – Method of allotment of a woman thus captured – Elopement – Instances of a method in connection with this – Custom of <i>tualcha mura</i> , the most usual way of obtaining a wife – Custom of <i>Unjipinna</i> , when a man waives his right to a woman allotted to him – Customs concerned with <i>Alknarinja</i> women.	
CHAPTER XXI	
Customs Concerned with Knocking Out of teeth ; Nose-Boring ; Growth of Breasts ; Blood ; Hair ; Child-Birth ; Food Restrictions ; Cannibalism.....	477
Operation of tooth-knocking-out in the case of both men and women belonging to the <i>Kartwia quatcha</i> , rain country – It is associated with the <i>Mbanbiuma</i> (water) ceremony – In other totem groups it is optional – Operation is performed by a <i>Kullia</i> or <i>Unkulla</i> man, by means of a pointed stick struck by a stone – The patient throws the tooth in the direction of the mother's Alchera camp and the mother provides the operator with food – In the case of a girl, she provides the food – Is not now an initiatory ceremony in the Arunta – Nose-boring – Promoting the growth of breasts – Girl taken close to the <i>Ungunja</i> or men's camp – She is painted by a <i>Gammona</i> – Ceremony at the first menstruation – Girl is now called <i>Wunga</i> – Blood given to old men by young men – Idea is often that of strengthening older men – Also ensures fealty, as Women not allowed to see the drawing of blood – Blood, drawing as a reconciliation ceremony – Blood drawn from woman – Deposits of red ochre associated with women's blood – <<<blood given to strengthen men and women when ill – Rubbing a mixture of red ochre and fat, charmed by women, on a sick man – Presentation of food to women after the man recovers – Rubbing a woman who is delicate with <i>Ertoacha</i> to strengthen her – Hair and customs associated with it – When a man's hair is cut he always sits down facing in the direction of his mother's Alchera camp – Customs at child-birth – Food restrictions – Present-day customs differ from those of the Alchera – A man must not touch food handled by his wife's father, but must share his food with him – General food restrictions – Husband not killing large game during the early months of his wife's pregnancy – Special food restrictions in regard to an Ulpmerka boy – Cannibalism.	
CHAPTER XXII	
Myths Relating to Sun, Moon, Eclipses, etc.....	496
The sun regarded as female, the moon as male – Tradition with regard to the sun – Sacred ceremony connected with the Sun totem – Myths with regard to the moon – The evening star a woman whose <i>Knanja</i> stone lies out to the west of Alice Springs – Eclipses associated with <i>Arungquilta</i> – The Pleiades – Mushrooms and toadstools.	

The Arunta

CHAPTER XXIII	
Organisation of Main Camps.....	501
Each local group has a permanent central camp or <i>Mbainda</i> – Divided into four main parts, like sectors of a circle – The northern occupied by the Ungalla and Umbitchana men with their wives and children, the eastern by the Appungerta and Panunga, the southern by the Uknaria and Bultara, the western by the Purula and Kumara – Each of the four has its <i>Ungunja</i> , men's camp, on the outside, and its <i>Lukwurra</i> , women's camp, on the inside – Restrictions in regard to men and women visiting different camps – The men must walk on the outside margin of the main camp, the women on the inside.	
CHAPTER XXIV	
Proceeding Attendant on Visiting Strange camp.....	505
Strict observance of forms and ceremonies – Etiquette on approaching a strange camp – Visit of southern natives to Alice Springs – Men coming on to ceremonial ground – Preliminary dance – Handing over the flaked sticks to the head man of the local group, who burns them – Challenging a visitor to cut himself in token of mourning – A visitor charged with having killed the brother of one of the men of the local group – A local man accusing one of the visitors of undue familiarity with his lubra – General recrimination and considerable excitement – The local and visiting Panunga and Bultara men separate themselves from the Kumara and Purula, and the latter retire from the field and camp by themselves. Relations between the two parties strained for a day, but after this harmony restored.	
CHAPTER XXV	
Clothing, Ornament and various Implements.....	510
Almost entire absence of clothing – Do not utilise the fur skins of animals – Public tassels – Women's aprons – <i>Chilara</i> or head-bands of men with designs similar to those on Churinga – Neck-bands of women – <i>Lonka-lonka</i> , a shell ornament – <i>Imampa</i> , a pad of emu feathers worn on the head by men – <i>Inkulta</i> , flaked sticks worn on the head by men – <i>Lalkira</i> , nose-bones – Musical instruments, <i>Wainba</i> , <i>Irra</i> , <i>Ipirra</i> – Wallets and bags made of twine, skin or bark – <i>Pituri</i> bags, construction of these – Spindle and string-making – <i>Pitchis</i> or wooden troughs, various forms of, made out of soft or hard wood.	
CHAPTER XXVI	
Weapons and Implements. (Mainly Wooden).....	521
The characteristic weapons are spears, spears-throwers, shields, boomerangs, stone knives and axes – Six forms of spears, five wooden, one stone-headed – <i>Amera</i> or spear-thrower – use of this for fire-making, by rubbing across a soft-wood shield – Shields – Boomerangs, various forms of – No return boomerang amongst the Central tribes – Fighting clubs.	

The Arunta

CHAPTER XXVII	
Stone Implements.....	536
<p>Stone weapons and implements represents Eolithic, Palaeolithic and Neolithic types – All of these types now used by Australian natives – Specimens of the crudest forms of flakes and of the most delicately chipped and well-ground ones are found side by side – Examples of these – Iron now replacing stone – Adzes, two types, straight with flake at one end, curved with flake at both ends – Different forms of flakes – Natives using an adze – Knives – method of making a flakes -Illustrations of different forms of flakes – Two forms of halting – Picks – Two forms of hafting, a straight piece of wood slit open to insert the flake and a withy, bent double – use of flaked stone implements – Ground axes and the method of making them.</p>	
CHAPTER XXVIII	
Decorative Art.....	551
<p>General remarks – Absence of carvings – Appreciation of colour – Distinctive names for only four, red, white, black and yellow – No blue pigment – Same name for blue, yellow and green – use of bird and plant down – Geometrical designs, concentric circles, spirals, curved lines – Identical designs represent quite different objects such as men, trees, frogs and flies – Methods of ornamentation, incision by a tooth, burning with fire-stick, painting the surface with ochre, etc., decoration with down – Zoo morphs, phytomorphs and geometrical designs – Designs on implements and weapons – Incised lines and painted designs – Ornamented boomerangs – Line and dot ornaments – Decorations during corroborees – Passing on of corroborees – Jitjingalla corroboree – Rain dance – Women's corroboree – Decoration during sacred ceremonies – Use of down – <i>Nurtunja</i> – <i>Waniga</i> – Designs on Churinga – Incised patterns, painted patterns, down – Nature and significance of incised designs – Concentric circles modified to form squares – Rock drawings – These are comparatively simple and crude – No attempt at sculpture – resemblance of geometrical designs to those on sacred objects – <i>Churinga ilpintira</i>, special drawings peculiar to each totem – Drawings of the Ulpmerka men at Quiurnpa and of the Udnirringita at Emily Gap.</p>	
APPENDIX A	
Names of Parts of the Body.....	579
APPENDIX B	
Names, Status Terms and Terms of Address.....	581
APPENDIX C	

The Arunta

The Churinga Belief.....	584
APPENDIX D	
The Alchera Belief and Traditions.....	589
APPENDIX E	
The Supposed Distinction of Australian Aboriginals into Straight an Waivy-Haired Individuals. (By O. W. Tiegs, DSC., Lecturer in Zoology in the Melbourne University).....	597
APPENDIX F	
Gesture or Sign Language.....	600

Glossary of Natives Terms Used.....	609
Index.....	629

The Arunta

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig.	Facing.	Pages
118.	Medicine man made by the <i>Eruncha</i> , with the <i>Eruncha marilla</i> or <i>Eruncha</i> design.....	397
119.	Various forms of implements of magic.....	398
120.	Position assumed when using the <i>Ungakura</i> pointing apparatus.....	400
121.	Position assumed when pointing the <i>Irna</i>	400
122.	<i>Ungakura</i> pointing apparatus.....	401
123.	<i>Takula</i> ornamented with burnt design.....	401
124.	<i>Injilla</i> , or pointing-bone, with its case, a hollow bone.....	401
125.	<i>Irna</i> , or pointing-stick, covered with bird's down.....	401
127.	<i>Iruntarinnia</i> ceremony of the Unjiamba totem.....	426
127A.	<i>Iruntarinia</i> ceremony of two <i>Eruncha</i>	427
128.	Widow smeared with Kaolin and wearing the <i>Chimurillia</i>	435
129.	<i>Chimurillia</i> , fur-string bands, etc., worn by the widow at the <i>Urpmilchimilla</i> ceremony.....	435
130.	<i>Atinga</i> party approaching the ceremonial ground.....	436
131.	<i>Atinga</i> party performing a boomerang dance.....	448
132.	Rubbing the thighs of the men of the <i>Atinga</i> party.....	448
133.	<i>Atinga</i> party and the <i>Kuru-urkna</i>	448
134.	<i>Atinga</i> party dancing round the spears.....	448
135.	<i>Atinga</i> party ; dance of the men who are to do the killing.....	449
136.	<i>Atinga</i> party ; men who are to do the killing falling on the ground.....	449
138.	Return of the <i>Atinga</i> ; old woman haranguing the men.....	450
139.	Return of the <i>Atinga</i> ; women testing the men's shields.....	451
140.	<i>Atinga</i> party ; man testing shields.....	450
141.	Emu-feather shoes worn by the <i>Kurdaitcha</i>	456
142.	Representation of the manner in which a <i>Kurdaitcha</i> creeps up to his enemy.....	457
143.	Woman dressed up as an <i>Illapurinja</i>	462
143A.	Knocking out tooth.....	457

The Arunta

144.	Ceremony of the White Bat totem connected with cannibalism.....	463
145.	Ceremony of the Sun totem of Ilparlinja.....	496
146.	Ceremony of the Sun totem.....	497
147.	Embracing after a performance of a ceremony of the Sun totem.....	497
149.	Visitors dancing into camp.....	506
150.	Men cutting shoulders in token of mourning.....	507
151.	Visiting ceremonies ; beginning of a quarrel.....	508
152.	Clothing and personal ornaments.....	509
153.	Pubic tassel.....	510
154.	Head-band with attached ornament of resin and kangaroo teeth.....	510
155.	Neck-bands ornamented with pendants of wild-dog tails.....	510
156.	Neck-band with small bones and rabbit-bandicoot tail tips.....	510
157.	Personal ornaments.....	511
158.	Various implements.....	514
159A.	Arunta native using spindle to make fur string.....	515
160.	Roughly made <i>pitchi</i>	518
161.	Gum tree from which a rough bark- <i>pitchi</i> has been cut.....	518
162.	Hard-wood <i>pitchi</i>	519
163.	Hard-wood <i>pitchi</i>	519
164.	Hard-wood <i>pitchi</i>	519
165.	Hard-wood <i>pitchi</i>	519
166.	Shallow soft-wood <i>pitchi</i>	519
167.	Soft-wood <i>pitchi</i> , shield-shaped.....	519
168.	Soft-wood <i>pitchi</i> , decorated.....	520
169.	Very deep soft-wood <i>pitchi</i> , unfinished.....	520
170.	Boat-shaped <i>pitchi</i>	520
171.	Boat-shaped <i>pitchi</i>	520
172.	Boat-shaped <i>pitchi</i> , in course of construction.....	520
174.	Spear-thrower, flat form.....	521
175.	Spear-thrower, concave form.....	521
176.	Fire-making.....	521
177.	Shields.....	528
180.	Boomerangs of different forms.....	529
182.	Ground diorite axe-head and roughly flaked flint found together on Wilson's Promontory, Victoria.....	536
183.	Flaked stone knife, with its sheath.....	536
184.	Flaked and chipped quartzite, porcelain and glass spear-heads, and the bone implement used in making them, North-west Australia.....	537
185.	Bark wallet containing spear-heads in process of making. On the right side is a rare form made out of shell.....	538

The Arunta

186.	Man making a <i>pitchi</i>	539
187.	Adze with large flint used for coarser work.....	539
188.	Adze with small, very regularly-shaped flint.....	539
189.	Two ends of an adze. Upper and end views.....	540
190.	Adze with large, irregular-shaped flint.....	540
192.	Stone knife of regular shape. Trigonal in section.....	540
193.	Stone knife of very regular shape. The blade made of opaline quartzite.....	540
194.	Stone knife, showing fourth facet for short distance down blade.....	541
195.	Stone knife, showing fourth facet running the whole length of the blade.....	541
196.	Stone knife, broad and somewhat irregularly shaped blade.....	541
197.	Stone knife, long, irregularly shaped blade.....	541
198.	Stone knife with irregular flaking and secondary chipping.....	544
199.	Stone knife with very flat blade and secondary chipping.....	544
200.	Stone knife with irregular flaking and secondary chipping round the point.....	544
201.	Stone knife with blade with four facets, the fourth forming a broad terminal cutting edge.....	544
202.	Woman's stone knife.....	545
203.	Woman's stone knife.....	545
204.	Woman's stone knife.....	545
205.	Wooden-hafted knife with very regularly flaked quartzite blade.....	545
206.	Wooden-hafted knife, with four facets.....	546
207.	Wooden-hafted knife, with emu track-mark on the wooden haft.....	546
208.	Wooden-hafted knife with irregular flaking and the blade small in comparison to the handle.....	546
209.	Wooden-hafted knife, showing secondary chippings.....	546
210.	Picks with stone heads surrounded by a stone withy.....	547
211.	Pick with the stone head embedded in a cleft in the solid handle.....	547
212.	Block of diorite roughly chipped in course of preparation for making an axe-head.....	547
213.	Tapping a block of diorite in preparation for making a stone axe.....	548
214.	Man grinding an axe-head.....	548
215.	Fixing the axe-head on to the handle with resin.....	548
216.	Method of hafting a ground axe.....	548
217.	Hafted ground axes.....	548
218.	Ornamented boomerang.....	548
219.	Ornamented boomerang.....	548
220.	Ornamented boomerang.....	548
221.	Ornamented boomerang.....	549
222.	Ornamented boomerang.....	549
223.	Ornamented boomerang.....	549
224.	Stone axe decorated with line ornament.....	556
225.	Beaked boomerang decorated with dots and groves that follow the outline of the weapon.....	556

The Arunta

226.	Man mixing plant down with pipeclay.....	557
227.	Boomerang decorated with line and dot ornament and grooves.....	557
228.	Boomerang ornamented with line and dot ornament and grooves.....	557
229.	Preparation for the Tjitjingalla corroboree.....	560
230.	Dance in the Tjitjingalla corroboree.....	560
231.	Decorations in the final dance of the Tjitjingalla corroboree.....	560
232.	Decorations used during a Rain ceremony.....	561
233.	Women's corroboree.....	562
234.	<i>Churinga Knanja</i> of a man of the Emu totem.....	563
235.	<i>Churinga Knanja</i> of a Kumara woman of the Yam totem.....	563
236.	Stone Churinga , Warramunga Tribe.....	563
237.	Stone Churinga of Rain totem.....	563
238.	<i>Churinga Knanja</i> of the Yam totem woman.....	563
239.	Churinga of a the honey-ant totem.....	563
240.	Churinga of a Rat totem, showing transition from circles to squares.....	568
241.	Churinga of the Bell Bird totem, showing series of concentric circles and squares.....	568
242.	Stone Churinga with straight lines within circles.....	568
243.	Churinga, Udnirringita totem.....	568
244.	Churinga, Udnirringita totem.....	568
245.	Preparation for a ground drawing of the Wollunqua totem.....	569
246.	The Wollunqua mound.....	569
247.	Ground drawing of the Wollunqua totem.....	569
	FIGURES IN THE TEXT	
126.	Drawing representing a woman on her back.....	416
137.	Diagram representing the <i>Aworra</i> ceremony during an <i>Atinga</i>	449
148.	Plan of Central Arunta camp.....	501
159.	Structure of the string bag.....	516
173.	Various forms of spear-heads.....	522
178.	Longitudinal of spear-head.....	522
179.	Ornamentation of a large boomerang.....	531
181.	Fighting-clubs.....	534
191.	Diagram illustrating the making of a flint knife.....	543
	PLATES	
Plate I.	Ceremonial objects.....	564
Plate II.	Native rock paintings.....	572

The Arunta

Plate III.	Sacred drawings on the rocks at Emily Gap.....	576
Plate IV.	Sacred drawings on the rocks at Quiumpa.....	578
Diagrams 1-64.	Illustrating Gesture Language. Appendix F.....	600

The Arunta

The Arunta

CHAPTER XV

The Tradition and the Powers of Medicine Men ; Various Forms of Magic

The individuals to whom the name of medicine men is usually given – though perhaps the term magic men or wizards would in certain respects be better – have a very considerable influence in the tribe. Before dealing with their powers we may first of all describe the way in which a man is admitted to the status of medicine man.

In the Arunta, and the same holds true of the Ipirra tribe, there are three distinct schools of medicine men – (1) those made by the *Iruntarinia* or spirits, (2) those made by the *Eruncha*, who are in reality only a special class of spirit individuals of a mischievous nature, and (3) those initiated by other medicine men. Sometimes the three kinds of practitioners practise side by side, but the two first are more highly thought of than the third. In the northern groups of the tribe the medicine man is called a *Railtchawa*, on the Finke River *Nung-gara*, and in the south at Charlotte Waters *Ingwalara*.

As an example of the making of medicine men by the *Iruntarinia* in the northern groups as well as in the Ipirra tribes, we will describe what is said to take place in connection with the initiation of a man of the Alice Springs group.

About fourteen miles to the south of Alice Springs there is a cave in a range of hills which rises to the north of a wide level stretch of country, now called Emily Plain. This cave, like all those in the range, is supposed to be occupied by the *Iruntarinia*, or spirit individuals, each one of whom is

The Arunta

in reality the double of one of the ancestors of the tribe who lived in the Alchera, or, in other words, of some lining member, as each one of these is but the reincarnation of one of these ancestors. Amongst other powers possessed by the *Iruntarinia* is that of making medicine men.

When any man feels that he is capable of becoming medicine man he wanders away from the camp quite alone until he comes to the mouth of the cave. Here, with considerable trepidation, he lies down to sleep, not venturing to go inside, lest he should, instead of becoming endowed with magic power, be spirited away for ever. At break of day, one of the *Iruntarinia* comes to the mouth of the cave, and, finding the man asleep, throws an invisible lance at him, which pierces the neck from behind, passes through the tongue, making therein a large hole, and then comes out through the mouth. The tongue remains throughout life perforated in the centre with a hole large enough to admit visible finger ; and, when all is over, this hole is the only visible and outward sign of the treatment of the *Iruntarinia*. How the hole is really made it is impossible to say, but , as shown in the illustration, it is always present in the genuine medicine man (Fig. 117). In some way, of course, the novice must make it himself ; but naturally no one will ever admit the fact ; indeed, it is not impossible that, in course of time, the man really comes to believe that it was not done by himself. A second lance thrown by the *Iruntarinia* pierces the head from ear to ear, and the victim falls dead, and is at once carried into the depths of the cave, which extends far under the plain and is supposed to terminate at a spot beneath what is called the Edith Range, ten miles distant.

The name of the cave, of which the natives have a superstitious dread, is Okalpara, and in it the *Iruntarinia* are supposed to live in perpetual sunshine and amongst streams of running water – a state of affairs which we may regard as the paradise of the Arunta native. Once, not very long ago, two natives, WO says tradition, not knowing the nature of the cave, entered it in search of water, and were never more heard of.

Within the cave the *Iruntarinia* removes all the internal

The Arunta

organs and provides the man with a completely new set, after which operation has been successfully performed he presently comes to life again, but in a stupefied condition.

This, however, does not last long, and when he has recovered to a certain extent the *Iruntarinia*, who is invisible except to a few highly-gifted medicine men and also to the dogs, leads him back to his own people. The spirit then returns to the cave, but for several days the man remains more or less strange in his appearance and behaviour, until one morning it is noticed that he has painted, with powdered charcoal and fat, a broad band across the bridge of his nose. All signs of strange behaviour have disappeared, and it is at once recognised that a new medicine man has graduated. According to etiquette he must not practise his profession for about a year, and if, during this time of probation, the hole in his tongue closes up, as it sometimes does, then he will consider that his virtues as a medicine man have departed, and he will not practise at all. Meanwhile, he dwells upon his experiences, doubtless persuading himself that he has actually passed through those which are recognised as accompanying the making of a medicine man by the *Iruntarinia*, and at the same time he cultivates the acquaintance of other medicine men, and learns from them the secrets of the craft, which consist principally in the ability to hide about his person and to produce at will small quartz pebbles or bits of stick ; and, of scarcely less importance than this sleight of hand, the power of looking preternaturally solemn, as if he were the possessor of knowledge quite hidden from ordinary men.

In addition to providing the young medicine man with a new set of internal organs, the *Iruntarinia* is supposed to implant in his body a supply of magic *Atnongara* stones, which he is able to project into the body of a patient, and so to combat the evil influences at work within. So long as these stones remain in his body he is capable of performing the work of a medicine man, but sometimes they are, for some reason, withdrawn, in which event they are supposed to return to the *Iruntarinia* from whom they came, and with their departure the man feels at once that his powers have also departed. What causes the man to become convinced that

The Arunta

the *Atnongara* stones have gone from him cannot be said ; but every now and again erstwhile medicine man is met with who tells you that they have gone away from him. There are certain foods from which the medicine man must abstain at risk of losing his powers. He may not, for instance, eat fat or warm meat, neither must he inhale the smoke from burning bones, nor go near to the nest of the large "bull-dog" ant (a species of *Myrmecia*), because if he were bitten by one of these he would lose his power for ever. The loud barking of the camp dogs will sometimes also cause the *Atnongara* stones to take flight.

With regard to the second school of medicine men – those made by the *Eruncha* – that is, by the *Ulthana* or spirits of *Eruncha* men of the Alchera – the plan of procedure is essentially similar to that of the *Iruntarinia*, the only difference being that instead of being taken by the *Eruncha* into a special cave, he is taken down into the earth at the spot at which the *Eruncha* lives. Close by Alice Springs, for example, in a rough rocky hill, lives the *Eruncha* of Coritja, as the spot is called, and occasionally he seizes upon a man, takes him into the earth and makes him into a medicine man.

Women doctors, though of rare occurrence, are occasionally met with, and are usually made by *Eruncha*, but sometimes by *Iruntarinia*, the method of initiation being precisely similar in the case of the women to that of the men.

In the case of the third school – that is, the medicine men made by other medicine men – the method of procedure is, naturally, quite different, and the following is an account of what took place at the making of one on the Upper Finke River.

The young man who desired to be initiated spoke to two old medicine men, one of whom had been initiated by the *Iruntarinia* and the other by an *Eruncha*, and told them what he wanted ; and on the following morning the latter, who are here called *Nung-gara*, took him along with another man to a secluded spot, and there they first of all made him stand up with his hands clasped behind his head, and told him that whatever happened he was to maintain perfect silence. The *Nung-gara* then withdrew from their bodies a number of small

The Arunta

clear crystal called *Ultunda* (the equivalent of the *Atnongara* of the Alice Springs and other parts in the north of the tribe), which were placed one by one, as they were extracted, in the hollow of a spear-thrower. When a sufficient number had been withdrawn, the *Nung-gara* directed the man who had come with them to clasp the candidate from behind and to hold him tightly. Then each of them picked up some crystals, and taking hold of a leg, gripped the stones firmly and pressed them slowly and strongly along the front of the leg and then up the body as high as the breast-bone. This was repeated three times, the skin being scored at intervals with scratches, from which blood flowed. By this means the magic crystals are supposed to be forced into the body of the man, who was now told to lie down at full length on his back. The *Nung-gara* then went some little distance away, and, striking an attitude, presented to project some of the crystals into the man's head. While doing this the left hand holding some of the crystals was placed on the palm of the right one, and in this position was jerked rapidly backwards and forwards several times. When this was they came up again and once more subjected the legs and abdomen, and this times the arms also, to scoring with the stones, after which each of them pressed a crystal on the head of the novice and struck it hard, the idea being to drive it into the skull, the scalp being made to bleed during the process.

The next operation consisted in one of the *Nung-gara* taking a "pointing-stick," and after having tied some hair-string round the middle joint of the first finger of the man's right hand, he forced the pointed end of the stick under the nail and for a considerable distance into the flesh, making thus a hole into which he pretended to press a crystal. The man was then told to keep a finger pressed up against the hole so as to prevent the stone from coming out, after which he was told to remain perfectly quiet and go to sleep. In the middle of the day the scoring was repeated and again in the evening ; after which the *Nung-gara* gave the man meat to eat in which they told him were *Ultunda*, and after this he was given water, which actually did contain a few small crystals, which he was told were *Ultunda*, and which, without any hesitation, he drank

The Arunta

straight off. On the day following his body was again scored, and he ate meat and drank water containing crystals, and in addition was given native tobacco or *Pituri* to chew, which also contained the same.

On the third day the scoring and eating and drinking were repeated, and he was told to stand up with his hands behind his head and to put his tongue out. One of the *Nung-gara* then withdrew from his skull just behind his ear (that is, he told the novice that he kept it here) a thin and sharp *Ultunda*, and, taking up some dust from the ground, dried the man's tongue with it, and then, pulling it out as far as possible, he made with the stone an incision about half an inch in length (Fig. 177). After a short rest one of the *Nung-gara* – the one who had been initiated by an *Eruncha* – rubbed the body of the man over with grease, and then, placing him on his back, proceeded to paint a special design upon his chest, abdomen and forehead. This design is called *Marilla*, and it is the *ilkinia* or sacred drawing of the *Eruncha*, the mark on the forehead representing what is called *erunchilcha*, which means literally translated, “the devil's hand,” the *Eruncha* being the evil or at least the mischievous spirit of the Arunta. A long black line in the centre of the drawing on the body represents the *Eruncha* himself, and the marks around it are supposed to represent the magic crystals which he carries in his body (Fig. 118). When the drawing was complete the man's fur-string bands were placed on his head, and leaves of a gum tree were fixed so as to nang¹ down from beneath them over the forehead, partly hiding the drawing of the *Eruncha's* hand. The newly made medicine man was then told that he must remain at the *Ungunja* – that is, the men's camp – and maintain a strict silence until the wound in his tongue had healed, or else the magic stone would pass out. For a very long time also he must abstain from eating fat of any kind, nor must he touch the flesh of wild dogs, fish or Echnida. He might eat the marrow of the bones of different animals, but only if the bones were broken and were voluntarily given to him by other men.

When all was over he returned to the camp and remained

¹ Nang Good or great "This tune is nang!"

The Arunta

at the *Ungunja* for about a month, during which time his *Anua*, *Mia* and *Ungaraitcha* (his elder, but not his *Quitia* or younger sister) sent him food. When he had recovered – and the treatment to which he had been subjected left him really in a low state – the *Nung-gara* men told him that he might go to his own camp ; but that for some little time yet, about a month, he must talk very little and must in every way be abstemious. At night-time he always slept with a fire between him and his *Anua*, the idea of which was to render him visible to the *Eruncha* and to make it clear to the latter that he was holding aloof from everyone, even his *Anua*. Should he fail to do this, then the *Eruncha* would cause the magic power to leave him and to return to the old *Nung-gara*, and thus his powers as a medicine man would disappear for ever.

So far as his functions are concerned, the medicine man may be regarded as partly, perhaps in the main, what this name implies, and at the same time as a wizard. His chief function is undoubtedly that of curing the natives ; but as all ailments of every kind, from the simplest to the most serious, are without exception attributed to the malign influence of an enemy in either human or spirit shape, the method of curing takes the form of an exhibition of what is really sleight of hand, the object being to remove from the body of the patient something, such as a pointing-stick or the broken pieces of a *Churinga*, which have been placed in it by the enemy. In many Australian tribes the equivalent of the medicine man amongst the Arunta is the one individual who can hold intercourse with the spirits ; but in this tribe this is by no means the case, as there are men who, without being medicine men, are especially favoured in his respect. In many tribes also it is only the medicine men or their equivalents who have the power of, for example, securing by means of special incantations the illness or death of the individual whom it is desired to harm, and therefore, to secure this end, recourse must be had to a medicine man. In the Arunta, *Ipirra* and other of the Central Australian tribes this does not hold true ; every man may have recourse to what is usually spoken of as sorcery, by means of which he may work harm of some kind to an enemy, and this power is not in any

The Arunta

way confined to the medicine men, though, on the other hand they are the only men who can counteract the evil influence of an enemy. At the same time, there are certain of the very old medicine men who are supposed to be endowed by the *Iruntarinia* with the special power of bringing disease down upon not only individuals, but whole groups of men and women.

In cases of sickness the natives have implicit faith in the medicine man, and in serious cases two or three, if they be available, are called in, in consultation.² No reward of any kind is given, or expected, nor is any blame attached in case of non-success, the latter being attributed to the malignant action of superior magic on the part of some hostile spirit or individual, though it is sometimes said, as we have heard on different occasions, that if a particular medicine man had been present he would have been able to counteract the influence of the enemy when the individual who was present was unable to do so and the patient died. Just as amongst ourselves, certain medicine men are regarded as better qualified and more able than others.

In ordinary cases the patient lies down on the ground while the medicine man bends over, rubs and sucks vigorously at the affected part of the body, spitting out every now and then supposed pieces of wood, bone or stone, the presence of which is believed to be causing the injury and pain. This suction is one of the most characteristic features of native medical treatment, as pain in any part of the body is always supposed to be due to the presence of some foreign body, which must be removed. Amongst especially the Western Arunta the medicine man, in addition to the *Atnongara* stones, is supposed to have a particular kind of lizard distributed through his body, which endows him with great suctorial power, such as the natives attribute to the lizard itself. In serious cases the action is more dramatic, and the medicine man needs a clear space in which to perform. The patient, perhaps too ill to sit up, is supported by some individual, while the medicine man who has been called in, and may have come a long distance, gravely examine him and consults with other

The Arunta

practitioners who may be present, and with the more immediate relatives of the patient, as to the nature of the illness. The diagnosis may occupy some time, during which every one maintains a very solemn appearance, all conversation being carried on in whispers. As a result the medicine man will perhaps pronounce that the sick man is suffering from a charmed bone inserted by a magic individual, such as a *Kurdaitcha* ; or perhaps, worse still, the verdict is that one of the *Iruntarinia* has placed in his body an *Ullinka* or short barbed stick attached to an invisible string, the pulling of which by the malicious spirit causes great pain (Fig. 119 , nos. 10, 11). If the latter be the case it requires the greatest skill of a renowned medicine man to effect a cure. While the patient is supported in a half-sitting attitude, the medicine man will first of all stand close by, gazing down upon him in the most intent way. Then suddenly he will go some yards off, and looking fiercely at him, bends slightly forwards and repeatedly jerks his arm outwards at full length, with the hand outstretched, the object being thereby to project some of the *Atnongara* stones into the patient's body, the object of this being to counteract the evil influence at work within the latter. Going rapidly and with a characteristic high knee action from one end of the cleared space to the other, he repeats the movements with dramatic action. Finally, he comes close again, and, after much mysterious searching, find and cuts the string, which is invisible to everyone except himself. There is not a doubt amongst the onlookers as to his having really done this. Then once more the projecting of the *Atnongara* stones takes place, and crouching down over the sick man he places his mouth upon the affected part and sucks, until at last the *Ullinka* is extracted, either in fragments or, very rarely, and only if he be a very distinguished medicine man, whole, and is shown to the wondering onlookers, the *Atnongara* stones returning, unseen, once more into his own body. When this is over, unless it is simply a case of senile decay on the part of the patient, in which case the medicine man is too acute to take so much trouble, when he knows pretty well that there is no possibility of effecting a cure, the chances are strongly in favour of the latter, but if death ensues

The Arunta

it is simply because the magic stick had been inserted in some vital part, or because the aid of the medicine man had not been called in early enough, or because his efforts had been maliciously thwarted by some *lruntarinia*.

The functions of the medicine man as a wizard or sorcerer are associated with, first, bringing ill upon other people, and, second, ascertaining who is responsible for the death of a native.

We have already mentioned that certain very old medicine men are able to bring disease down not only on individuals, but upon whole groups of men and women, but this is only, in reality, a further extension of the power possessed by each man of working harm by magic. Amongst, however, certain tribes such as the Mungaberra, living out to the west of the McDonnell Ranges, the medicine men are supposed to have special powers. They can, and often do, assume the form of eagle-hawks, and when thus disguised travel long distances at night-time, visiting camps of other tribes, amongst whom they cause much suffering and even death by their habit of digging their sharp claws into people. Only recently, in our presence, a medicine man extracted parts of eagle-hawk claws from a native of the Arunta tribe who had been maliciously attacked in this way at night-time by a Mungaberra medicine man.

However, as a wizard, the function of the medicine man is mainly associated with finding out the particular individual who is responsible for the death of any native. Sometimes when a man is dying he will whisper in the ear of the medicine man the name of the culprit, but even if he does not do so, the medicine man will often state, as soon as death has taken place, the direction in which he lives and very probably the group to which he belongs. It may perhaps be two or three years before he discovers the actual man, but sooner or later he does so. During the progress of the Engwura, which we witnessed, news was brought into the camp that a very celebrated old man had died far away out to the west. His death was due simply to senile decay, but along with the news of his decease, word was brought that he had been killed by a charmed stick pointed at him by a man of a distant group, the locality of which was stated with certainty.

The Arunta

Another duty of the medicine man is, as already described to accompany the *Kurdaitcha*, and to assist him by magic power in rendering the victim unconscious of what has befallen him.

In what has just been described in connection with the medicine men, as well as in the account of the *Kurdaitcha* and *Illapurinja*, certain forms of magic have been dealt with. There remain, however, certain other customs which may be grouped under the general designation of magic, and which may be conveniently dealt with together.

The first of these, which is one of the commonest forms of magic in many savage tribes, and is, indeed, world-wide in its distribution, is the pointing of a bone or stick at some individual with the idea of injuring him. Amongst the Arunta tribe these pointing-sticks or bones are known under various names, such as *Injilla*, *Irna*, *Ullinka*, *Ungakura*, *Takula* and *Ingwania*, of which we will describe the nature and uses of the first five as typical examples.

The *Injilla* (Fig. 124) is a small bone about six inches long, at one end of which is a small lump of resin procured from the porcupine grass, and round this a few strands of human hair string are wound. It is used by a *Kurdaitcha* man, who places it under the tongue of his victim, its special virtue when thus employed being that it renders the injured man perfectly oblivious of what has befallen him at the hands of the *Kurdaitcha*. It may also be used for the same purpose as the *Irna* now to be described.

The *Irna* (Fig. 125) is a small piece of wood perhaps as much as nine inches in length, though it may be less than this. At one it tapers to a point and at the other is tipped with a small lump of porcupine grass resin. The *Takula* is further ornamented with a series of notches which are apparently made with a fire-stick (Fig. 123). The *Injilla* or *Irna* – both being equally effective – are charmed – that is, are sung over – and thereby endowed with magic power in the following way. The man who has made one goes alone into the bush to some unfrequented spot at a distance from the main camp, taking great care that he is seen by no one. After making quite sure that he is not being watched, he chooses a hidden spot for

The Arunta

his incantations and stands the *Injilla* or *Irna* upright in the ground. Then he crouches down above it and in muttered tones hisses out the following curses :

“*I-ta pukalana pertulinja appinia-a*” (May your heart be rent asunder).

“*Pertulinja appinia intaapa inkirilia quin appani intarpakala-a*” (May your backbone be split open and your ribs torn asunder).

“*Okinchinha quin appinia ilcha ilchaa-a*” (May your head and throat be split open).

When this has been done he returns to his camp, leaving the *Injilla* or the *Irna*, as the case may be, in the secret spot for three or four days, after which he removes it to within a short distance of the camp. Here he carefully conceals it until it is dark, and then, while the natives are sitting chatting round the camp fire, he steals out into the darkness, procures the *Injilla* or *Irna*, and stealthily approaches the camp until the features of his victim are clearly discernible by the fire light, he himself, of course, keeping carefully out of view. He now turns his back upon his victim and, stooping down, jerks the *Injilla* or *Irna* towards him several times, muttering the curse already quoted as he does so in a subdued tone. When this has been done he once conceals the implement and returns to camp. Within a short time – a month at most – the victim is supposed to sicken and die, unless his life be saved by the magic of a medicine man. When the charm takes effect and the victim becomes ill, the man secretly takes away the implement which he has used, and in the case of the *Injilla* burns the hair-string, while expressing the wish that the destruction of his enemy's life may be as surely brought about as has been that of the string.

In some instances two men take part in the “pointing,” which is then done in the way represented in Fig. 120 and 121. ²

It is common to attribute almost all deaths, or at least a

² Figs. 120 and 121 represent the way in which magic pointing-sticks and bones are used. It would be impossible to photograph the native during an actual performance. On one occasion a native who had only for a moment shown us how he pointed a bone, stooping down and jerking it backwards between his leg, became very frightened, because he imagined some of the evil magic had entered him, and we had much difficulty in reassuring him.

The Arunta

majority of them, to the use of a “poison” bone or stick, and the performance of “pointing” has to be conducted in strict secrecy, as, were any man caught in the act, he would be most severely punished and most likely put to death.

The *Ullinka* (Fig. 119, no. 11), which is always used by the *Iruntarinia*, is a special form of *Irna* with a hooked end instead of a lump of resin, and is supposed to be a favourite charm used by malevolent spirits to annoy and often to kill men against whom they have some special grudge. The *Ullinka* is projected into the body of the victim, and the string to which it is attached is every now and then maliciously pulled by the *Iruntarinia* so as to add to the annoyance and pain of the man. As we have already said, it requires a very able medicine man to abstract one of these so as to make quite sure that there is no part of it left in the body of the victim.

A special and very potent implement of magic is known as *Ungakura* (Fig. 122). It consists of a long coil of human hair-string to one end of which five or six small pointing-bones are attached, and to the other end one bone and two eagle-hawk claws. This is used especially by medicine men who live far away to the west. The bones are full of *Arungquilta* that can be projected into the victim and, in addition to this, the medicine man can cause the claws to enter the victim within whom they are continually clawing at and nipping his internal organs, more especially the liver and intestines. Unless they are detected and extracted by an able medicine man the case is hopeless.

In addition to procuring death by giving an enemy a bone or stick, it is a very common thing to charm a spear by singing over it.

Any bone, stick, spear, etc., which has thus been “sung” is supposed to be endowed with what the natives call *Arungquilta* – that is, magical poisonous properties – and any native who believes that he has been struck by, say, a charmed spear is almost sure to die, whether the wound be slight or severe, unless he be saved by the counter magic of a medicine man. There is no doubt whatever that a native will die after the infliction of even a most superficial wound if only he believes the weapon which inflicted the wound had been “sung”

The Arunta

over and thus endowed with *Arungquilta*. He simply lies down, refuses food and pines away. Not long ago a man from Barrow Creek received a slight wound in the groin. Though there was apparently nothing serious the matter with him, still he persisted in saying that the spear had been charmed and that he must die, which accordingly he did in the course of a few days. Another man coming down to the Alice Springs from the Tennant Creek contracted a slight colt, but the local men told him that the members of a group about twelve miles away to the east had taken his heart out, and believing this to be so, he simply laid himself down and wasted away. In a similar way a man at Charlotte Waters came to us with a slight spear wound in his back. He was assured that the wound was not serious, and it was dressed in the usual way, but he persisted in saying that the spear had been "sung", and that though it could not be seen, yet in reality it had broken his back and he was going to die, which accordingly he did. As a result of this a party was organised among the members of his group to avenge his death, and the man who was supposed to have wounded him with the charmed weapon was killed.

Instances of occurrences such as these could be multiplied and though, of course, it is possible to prove that death would not have followed under any circumstances – that is, whether the native had or had not imagined the weapon to have been "sung" – yet, with a knowledge of what wounds and injuries he will survive if he does not suspect the intervention of magic, it is not possible to explain death under such circumstances except as associated directly with the firm belief of the injured man that *Arungquilta* has entered his body, and that therefore he must die.

It is useless for an ordinary local medicine man to operate in these cases. Wounds from charmed spears or other weapons are of a different nature from injuries due to the placing of a pointing-stick in the body of the victim. In this latter case there is something tangible which the medicine man can remove, but in the former there is simply an intangible from of *Arungquilta*. A case, which occurred recently during a fight at Alice Springs, will serve to illustrate

The Arunta

the matter. An Arunta native was hit by a boomerang, which inflicted a wound by no means dangerous as such, but the difficulty was the wounded man declared that the weapon, which had come down from the Ipirra tribe which lives away to the north of the Arunta, had been "sung" by a Ipirra man. An Arunta medicine man was of no use under such circumstances, but fortunately there was an Ipirra man in camp, and he was brought and "sang" – that is, went through the usual pantomime of making passes, sucking and muttering over the wound. As he belonged to the same locality as the man who had originally "sung" the boomerang, it was supposed that he could counteract the influence of Ipirra *Arungquilta*, which he successfully did.

A very important form of magic instrument is made from the hair of a dead man. When a man dies his hair is cut off by his sons ; or, failing them, by the sons of his elder brothers. While the hair is being cut off, the women and children retire out of sight. Some time after the burial of the man the hair is taken to a secluded spot safe from the intrusion of women, and here the sons and younger brothers of the deceased make it up into a hair-girdle, which is given to it, or, failing him, to a younger brother. If neither son or younger brother be alive, then it goes to the eldest son of an elder brother. The *Kullia* or elder brother cannot himself inherit the girdle, which is called a *Kuru-urkna* and must always descend to a man which is tribally younger than the dead man. This girdle is a valued possession, and is only worn on such occasions as an avenging expedition or when a man is going out as a *Kurdaitcha*. It is supposed to be endowed with magic power, and to add to its possessor all the warlike attributes of the dead man from whose hair it was made. It ensures accuracy of aim and at the same time destroys that of an adversary. In the same way a small piece of a dead man's hair – cut from the body after death – is sometimes placed in the inside of one of the ordinary hair necklets, and worn as a charm by men. To place one of these magic girdle or necklets by the side of a woman or child would be productive of serious evil to her.

The Arunta

The *Kuru-urkna* is the most sacred and valuable of all the objects of magic used by the natives. The word is derived from *Kuruna*, a spirit, and *urkna*, which means juice or sap. *Urkna* is applied, for example, to juice that is formed when meat is what the natives call *Kirra urkna* – that is meat that has liquefied and “gone bad altogether.” *Urkna* is used also for the juice that drops down from a dead body (*atua erilgna*) on a platform. Its meaning is best expressed by the word “essence.” The hair is always cut from the body at the graveside immediately after death. The men say, *Gola ulda* (hair on a man's head), *undaga* (cut) ; *kuru-urkna kuruna umbanya*, the *Kuru-urkna* and *Kuruna* are together. They also say, *Kuruna gola ni-inda* – The *Kuruna* and the hair are one. The *Kuruna* goes away until the girdle is made. It then comes back and is supposed to go into and frequent it when it wishes to do so. There is usually the white tail-tip of a rabbit-bandicoot (*alpita*) attached to the girdle in which the *Kuruna* rests.

A dead man's *Immitnia* and *Kulchia* – that is, his opossum fur-string girdle and head-bands – are also held in high esteem. When a man dies these are carefully preserved, and when the *Urpilchimilla* ceremony has been performed at the grave they are made up into what are called *Okinchalanina irruknakinna*. The first of these two words is the name given to the ordinary necklets made of opossum fur-string, which is well greased and red-ochred, and worn on ordinary occasions. The second is compounded of the words *Irra*, he, *Ulkna*, grave, *kinna*, from, which will serve to show that the ornaments worn by the dead man are supposed to be endowed in some way with the attributes of the dead man (Fig. 119, nos. 12, 13).

When the necklets have been made, it is then decided to whom they shall given. While the hair of the dead man himself must go to some member of his own moiety of the tribe – that is, to his father's side – the *Irrulknakinna* must be given to some member of the other moiety – that is, to his mother's side – and not only this, but they must go to a member of another local group. They are what is called *ekeirinja* or tabu, to men of the same local group as that to which the dead man belonged.

When the necklets are ready, the men of a neighbouring

The Arunta

group are summoned by messengers sent for the purpose and assemble at the men's camp, to which the women may not come, and here the son or younger brother of the dead man places the *Irruknakinna* round the necks of the chosen recipients, by whom they are very highly valued.

In the central and northern groups of the Arunta tribe this special form of necklets is made of perhaps four or five circles of hair-string, each about half an inch in diameter, but in the Western Arunta there is but one circle, or rather horse-shoe-shaped structure forming a coil about an inch a half in diameter, the two ends of which are tied together by strands of opossum fur-string.

A form of string implement also associated with magic is called *Ililika*. This consist of about fifty or sixty comparatively thin strands of tightly strung string, made of vegetable fibre. From their use they may be spoken of as knouts³ and, though seldom seen, though seldom seen, most of the men carry one about in their wallet. The sight of one is alone enough to cause the greatest fright to a woman who has offended her black fellow⁴, while the stroke is supposed to result in death, or at least in maiming for life. In addition to this use, the *Ililika* is sometimes unwound and cracked like a whip in the direction of any individual whom it is desired to injure, when the evil influence is supposed to travel through the air, and so to reach the victim. Though in use amongst the Arunta, Ilpirra, Kaitisha and Warramunga tribes, they are only actually manufactured and endowed with their magic power by the members of the latter tribe, and it is knowledge of this fact which causes them to be viewed with such peculiar dread by the women. Magic of a distant group has a very potent influence on the average magic mind (Fig. 119, nos. 1, 2).

Away out to the west on the internal border-land of Western Australia is a tribe known as the Wai-ingurri. Amongst these the name of the sun is *Tchintu*, and the same name is also applied to an object of magic which consists of a small pear-shaped lump of porcupine grass resin, into one end of which are fixed two incisor rat-teeth, and at the other end is attached a stout piece of hair-string about two feet in length (Fig. 119, no. 21). The string is covered with red down, and the whole

3 Fouet utilisé contre les criminels en Russie.

4 Australian aborigène.

The Arunta

is carried out of sight, wrapped up in thin pieces of bark of the paper-bark tree. The specimen figured was obtained from a man living amongst the Western Arunta, and to him it had again been given by an old medicine man of the Wai-ingurri tribe, the members of which are reported to be very expert in matters of magic. In connection with this statement it may be remarked that all distant groups are, as a general rule, supposed to be especially fond of and powerful in, the practice of magic. This *Tchintu* is supposed to contain the heat of the sun, and it is believed that by placing it on the tracks of an individual the latter will be seized by a violent fever which will rapidly burn him up. When examining the specimen in the presence of the man to whom it belonged, a little of the down fell off, and it was with evident fear pushed aside and then covered over with sand.

We may now deal with various forms of magic which are concerned with the procuring of wives, though it must be remembered that women obtained, or supposed to be obtained, by the aid of these magic means must belong to the proper section into which, and into which only, a man may marry. That is, for example, a Panunga man can only legitimately use magic to help him to secure a Purula woman.

The first of these methods is used when the woman whom it is desired to charm lives in some distant group. When a man is desirous of securing such a woman for himself, and it makes no difference whether she be already assigned or not to some other man – indeed, she is perfectly sure to be so – he takes a small wooden Churinga about six or eight inches in length, or, if he has not got one, then he will manufacture one for the occasion, marking it with a design of his own totem. This particular form of Churinga is called a *Namatwinna* from the words *nama*, grass, and *twinna*, to strike, because when using it, it is struck against the ground.⁵ Armed with it he goes into the bush alone or accompanied by two or three friends whom he has asked to come, and who may be of any relationship to him. All night long the men keep up a low singing of Quabara

⁵ This form of Churinga is never placed in the *Pertalchera*, and has no *Kuruna* associated with it. It is especially used in connection with the charming of Alknarinja women.

The Arunta

songs, together with the chanting of amorous phrases of invitations addressed to the woman. At daylight the man stands up alone and swings the Curinga, causing it first to strike the ground as he whirls it round and round and makes it hum. His friends remain silent, and the sound of the humming is carried to the ears of the far-distant woman, and has the power of compelling affection – that is, if she be willing – and of causing her sooner or later to comply with the summons. Not long ago at Alice Springs a man called some of his friends together and performed the ceremony, and in a very short time the desired woman, who was on this occasion a widow, came in from Glen Helen, about fifty miles to the west of Alice Springs, and the two are now man and wife, the union being regarded as a perfectly lawful one, as they belonged to intermarrying sections.

This custom is a well-recognised one. If, by its means, a man obtains the wife of another black fellow, and the latter come armed, as he most likely will, to resent the interference, then the men who belong to the group of the aggressor will stand by the latter and support his claims, if necessary, by fighting. The woman naturally runs some risk, as, if caught in the act of eloping, she would be severely punished, if not put to death. Under no circumstances would a man be aided in securing a woman of a section into which he might not lawfully marry, nor would he, even if successful in doing so, receive any assistance from his friends in the event of a quarrel arising, as it certainly would, in connection with the abduction.

Another method of obtaining a wife is by means of a charmed *Chilara* or head-band (Fig. 152). The latter consists of a number of strands usually made of opossum or euro fur-string placed side by side so as to form a flat band which stretches across the forehead from ear to ear. On special occasions, such as dancing festivals, this will be decorated with designs drawn in red ochre and pipeclay. When a native is desirous of charming a woman he will make one of these *Chilara* out of euro fur-string and whiten it with pipeclay, or else, so it is said, by rubbing it against the white bark of *Eucalyptus terminals*. Then in secret he charms it by singing over it,

The Arunta

and, placing it on his head, wears it about the camp so that the woman can see it. By some mysterious means her attention is drawn to it, and she becomes violently attracted to the man, or, as the natives say, her internal organs shake with eagerness. At night, if possible, when all is quiet she creeps into the camp. Sometimes two men who are friends will decide upon making and wearing *Chilara* so as to charm two women. After wearing them they will depart to their own camps, and the women, while pretending to go out hunting, will in reality follow the men, and probably not be missed till the evening, when the unlucky husbands will return to find their respective camps empty. How often this method is resorted to it is difficult to say, but it certainly is employed at times. At Alice Springs recently a man named Urkaitchapurinia, when visiting a spot about seventy miles away, to the east, his wife being with him, was attracted by a woman living there who was called Thunginpuriturinia, who was the wife of another man. While out hunting during the day he made *Chilara*, and having charmed it by singing over it, wore it when coming into the camp, where he took care to show himself to the woman, who in her own words became *Okunjepunna oknirra*, the equivalent of our expression "much infatuated." That night she went to his camp and talked with his wife, and the next day when he left for Alice Springs she followed him, and has ever since been living with him, though the elopement has been the cause of very much ill-feeling between the two groups concerned.

In another case known to us a man named Allapita charmed by means of a *Chilara* a woman named Irriakura, who was afterwards captured and killed by her previous husband and his friends, who went in search of her and her charmer.

Whilst it is an undoubted fact that these methods of obtaining possession of a woman are actually practised, it is not probable that they are of very frequent occurrence, for the simple reason that everything depends on the acquiescence of the woman, and with the sure and certain knowledge that, if caught in the act of deserting the man to whom she has been assigned, she will meet with very severe punishment and in all probability be put to death, while, even if not caught at the

The Arunta

time, she is almost certain to come in for rough handling during the course of the quarrel which is bound to ensue, the woman is not very easily charmed away from her original possessor. Still, as we have said, she sometimes is, and this method allows of the breaking through of the hard and fast rule which for the most part obtains, and according to which the woman belongs to the man to whom she has been betrothed, probably before her birth.

It may be as well to note that these "runaway marriages" which are seemingly irregular are not so in reality. Certain men and women are *Anua* to one another – that is, they may lawfully marry – and so long as the contract is entered into between two who are thus entitled tribally to enter into it there is no irregularity. It is a breach of manners, but not of custom, and it then comes to be merely a test of strength between the local friends of the two men who are both *Anua* – that is tribal husbands -- of the girl. It is also worthy of note, as contrasted with what takes place in other parts of the continent, that the men to assist a particular man in a quarrel are those of his locality, and not of necessity those of the same totem as himself ; indeed the latter consideration does not enter into account, and in this as in other matters we see the strong development of what we have called the "local influence" when dealing with the Engwura ceremony. The men who assist him are his brothers, blood and tribal. That is, if he be a Panunga man he will have the assistance of the Panunga and Ungalla men of his locality, while if it comes to a general fight he will have the help of the whole of his local group. His division of the tribe into local groups, with the consequent development of a more or less strong local feeling, is one of the leading features of the Arunta tribe.

Another means of charming women is found in the much-valued shell ornament which is traded down through the centre of the continent from the tribes living away on the north coast, who manufacture it out of the shell of *Melo ethiopica* or *Leleagrina margaritifera*. This is often worn, especially at corroborees, suspended from the waist-girdle. If a man desires to charm a particular woman he takes the *Lonka-lonka*,⁶

⁶ The *Lonka-lonka* is also used as a charm in connection with sickness of any kind. Laid on the chest of a man it is supposed to have great curative properties.

The Arunta

as the ornament is called, to some retired spot and charms it by singing over it "*Ma quatcha purnta ma quillia purnta*," which words convey an invitation to the lightning to come dwell in the *Lonka-lonka* (Fig. 119 no. 19). After the charming has taken place it is hung on a digging-stick at the corroboree ground until night-time, when the man removes it and ties it on to his waist-belt. While he is dancing, the woman whom he wishes to attract alone sees the lightning flashing on the *Lonka-lonka*, and all at once her internal organs shake with emotion. If possible she will creep into his camp that night or take the earliest opportunity to run away with him.

A woman will also be charmed by the use of a native conch of very primitive construction called an *Ulpirra*. A small fire is lighted and a body of smoke made by placing green bush on it; the *Ulpirra* is then held over the fire so that the smoke passes through it while the man charms it by singing, whilst he thrust his head into and swallows some of the smoke. That night at the corroboree ground while the dance goes on he blows the horn, and at once the woman becomes *Okunjepunna oknirra*, or much infatuated, she alone feeling the influence of the charmed *Ulpirra*.

Amongst the churinga there are certain special ones which are used for special magic purposes, the latter having an intimate relationship to the totem to which they belong. One of these is called *Churinga Unginia* and belongs to a rat totem, the animal being distinguished by the possession of very long whiskers. Unlike any other Arunta Churinga with which we are acquainted, this one has a lump of resin attached to one end and is painted with alternate stripes of red and black. It is in special request by the young men, as it has a remarkable power of increasing the growth of the beard. The ceremony is a very simple one. The chin of the young man is first of all pricked all over with a pointed bone, and then carefully stroked with the Churinga. During the rubbing it is supposed that a stimulus resulting in the growth of whiskers, the most striking feature of the animal represented by the Churinga, passes from the latter to the chin which it rubs.

The Arunta

Another Churinga which belong to the Amunga or fly totem is used as a charm in the case of eyes, which, as not unfrequently happens in Central Australia, become completely closed up by inflammatory growth consequent upon the bites of the innumerable flies which form one of the most objectionable pests of the centre. In the case of the whisker stone, as we have seen, it is supposed to put some of its virtues into the man who uses it, whereas in the case of the fly stone the idea seems to be exactly reversed, as the stone is supposed either to withdraw something out of the eyes which has been put in by the flies, or possibly to supply something which will act as an antidote to what the animals, one of which its represents, have put in.

Amongst the Kaitisha curious small stones called *Mauia* are used and traded south to the Arunta. They are supposed to be highly charged with magic power, and amongst other uses to which they are put, is that of causing the victim to die whilst asleep. One method of securing this result is to place a tiny fragment of the stone on a long stick or the blade of a spear, and then carefully to drop it on to the face of the victim while he sleeps, for if this be done he will never awake. The Arunta natives make no *Mauia* stones themselves, and are extremely frightened of them. On one occasion one of them was brought to us to be examined. The parcel in which it was carefully wrapped was the size of an ordinary pillow, but wrapper after wrapper was taken off until the dreaded contents were exposed to view, and proved to be a minute stone, which subsequent analysis showed was a fragment of magnesium limestone.

Amongst the Arunta tribe, women, while not dealing with magic as a general rule, or at any rate not to anything like the extent that the men do, are still supposed to be able to exercise peculiar powers in regard to the sexual organs.⁷ To bring on a painful affection in those of men, a woman will procure the spear-like seed of a long grass (*Inturkirra*), and having charmed it by singing some magic chant over it, she awaits an opportunity to pint and throw it toward the man

⁷ As a general rule women are not supposed to be able to exercise much magic, except in regard to the sexual organs, but we have known of a woman being speared to death by the brother or her husband, who accused her of having killed the latter by means of a pointing-stick.

The Arunta

whom she desires to injure. Shortly after this has been done the man experiences pain, as if he had been stung by ants, his parts become swollen, and he at once attributes his sufferings to the magic influence of some woman who wishes to injure him. A woman may also charm a handful of dust which she collects while out digging up yams or gathering seeds, and having "sung" it, brings it into camp with her. She takes the opportunity of sprinkling it over a spot where the man whom she wishes to injure is likely to micturate. If he should do so at his spot he would experience a scalding sensation in the urethra and afterwards suffer a great amount of pain. Women may also produce disease in men by singing over and thus charming a finger, which is then inserted in the vulva ; the man who subsequently has connection with her will become diseased and may lose his organs altogether, and so when a woman wishes to injure a man she will sometimes, after thus "poisoning" herself, seek an opportunity of soliciting him, though he be not proper *Anua*. Syphilitic disease amongst the Arunta is, as a matter of fact, very frequently attributed to his form of magic, for it must be remembered that the native can only understand disease of any form as due to evil magic, and he has to provide what appears to him to be a suitable form of magic to account for each form of disease.

As love-charms women will sometimes make and "sing" special *Oknichalanina* or fur-string necklets, which they place round the man's neck, or they may simply charm a food such as a witchetty grub or lizard and give this to the man to eat.

Just as we find magic used in connection with the securing of a wife who is already the property of another man, so we find also a special form of magic employed in the punishment of the individual who is guilty of the theft. In the Western and South-western Arunta are famed for their skill in magic, and especially in various forms of *Arungquilta*.⁸ To punish a man

8 This is a term of somewhat vague import, but is always associated at bottom with the possession of supernatural evil power. A thin opossum or emu is either *Arungquilta* or endowed with *Arungquilta* ; in fact, the idea can be best expressed by saying that "it is possessed by an evil spirit". A pointing-stick used by a medicine man is *Arungquilta*, and so is the Churinga which has been sung over and is carried by the *Illapurinja* woman. The name *Arungquilta* is applied indiscriminately either to the evil influence or to the object in witch it is for time being, or permanently, resident.

The Arunta

who has stolen a wife and who belongs to a distant group, or to one which is too powerful to make it advisable to allow matters to come to an open fight, two men, perhaps the former husband and another man to whom the stolen woman is *Anua* – but they need not of necessity be either of them *Anua* – prepare a special implement of magic. A thin flake of flint or quartzite, in fact a miniature knife blade, is made, to the blunt end of which a lump of resin is attached, and to this a miniature spear is fixed. Then a very small spear-thrower is made, and into this a hole is bored so that the end of the spear fits tightly into it. To this implement the name of *Arungquilta* is applied. It is painted all over with red ochre, and when this is dry, cross bars of white, yellow and black are added along the whole length.

It is now sung over and left in the sun for some days at a secluded spot, the men going to it every day and singing to it a request to go and kill the man who stole the woman, the words of the request being “Go straight ; go straight and kill him”. Finally the two men come to the spot, and after singing for some time, one man kneels down, huddling himself together with his forehead touching the ground in front of his knees, while the other man takes up the magic implement, and, standing between the feet of the first man, throws the thing with all his force in the direction in which his enemy lives. When he has done this he kneels, huddled up in the same position as the other man, and with his head between the latter's feet. In this position they remain in perfect silence until they hear the *Arungquilta*, which is regarded in this instance as an evil spirit resident in the magic implement, saying, “Where is he ?” Upon hearing the voice – and sometimes they have to remain in this most uncomfortable position for several hours – they get up and return to camp, where they abstain from talking and are always listening. By and by if the *Arungquilta* be successful – and it is generally supposed to be so – they hear a noise like a crash of thunder, and then they know that, in the form of a great spear, it has gone straight to the man, mutilating and thus killing him. This form of *Arungquilta* is frequently seen at night, and sometimes even during the daytime, streaking across the sky like

The Arunta

a ball of fire. Quite recently a man out west was found mutilated and dead, and certain men living at Henbury on the Finke River are accused of having projected the *Arungquilta*.

Another form of *Arungquilta* which produces comets is brought about in the following way, and is only used for punishing women. If a woman runs away from her husband and he is unable to recover her, he and his friends – that is, men of his local group – assemble at a secluded spot, where a man skilled in magic draws upon the surface of a small patch of ground, which has been cleared and smoothed down for the purpose, a rough diagram, of which the accompanying sketch (Fig. 126) is a copy.

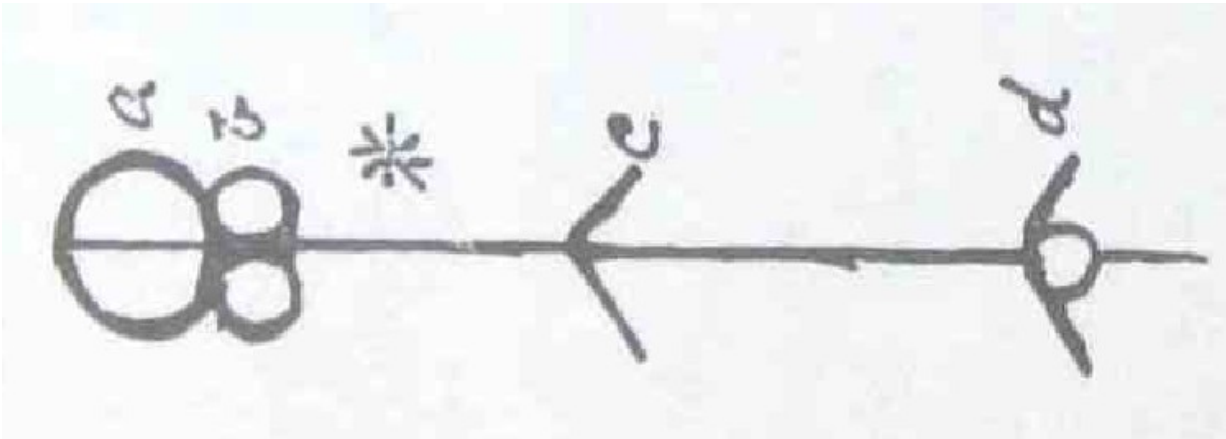


Fig. 126 . – Drawing intended to represent a woman lying on her back. *A*, is the head; *b*, the eyes; *c*, the arms; *d*, the legs;. The asterisk indicates where a piece of bark is placed representing the woman's spirit.

This drawing is simply marked out on the ground with the finger, and is intended to represent the figure of the woman lying down on her back. It is called *Aworra*, a term which has much the same significance as the word emblem.⁹ While the drawing is being made, and throughout the whole proceedings, low chants are sung, the burden of which is an exhortation to the *Arungquilta* to go out and enter her body and dry up all of her fat. When the drawing is done, a piece of green bark is placed at the spot marked with an asterisk. This is supposed to represent the spirit part of the woman, and then all the miniature spears, which have been made for the purpose and have been “sung”. The spear, with the bark into which they are fixed, are then flung as far as they can be thrown in the direction in which the woman is supposed to be. The party now returns to camp,

⁹ The same term though it is sometimes pronounced as if spelt *oara*, is applied to (1) the drawing now referred to, (2) the hole made in the ground to represent the woman belonging to the man whom an avenging party is about to kill. In addition to these there is the ceremony of *Okoara* during circumcision, when sand is scraped up and emptied into the hands of the man who is to perform the operation, the sand being emblematic of the youth.

The Arunta

and sooner or later, very often after the lapse of a considerable time, the woman's fat dries up, she dies, and her *ulthana*, or spirit, appears in the sky in the form of a shooting-star.

We have already, in the account of Undiara, referred to the old man Ungutnika who plucked boils from his body, each of which turned into one of the group of stones which are still to be seen at Undiara and are called *Perta tubira* – that is, stones sores. Men who desire to harm others in one particular way make a number of small wooden initiation spears and go to these stones, at which they throw the spears, taking care that the points strike the stones. The spears are picked up and thrown on by one from a spear-thrower in the direction of the man whom it is desired to injure. The spears are supposed to carry with them *Arungquilta* from the stones and this produces an eruption of painful boils in the individual or individuals towards whom they are thrown. Sometimes a whole group of people can be afflicted in this way by a skilful magic man.

Yet another form of *Arungquilta* is associated in tradition with the story of an emaciated emu. In the Alchera a very thin and emaciated emu came from the far north-east, from a mythical place called Atnangara. It carried on its head a *Nurtunja*, and a Churinga under its armpit. Its body was covered with feathers and, inside, it carried some eggs. The creature was, in fact, half emu and half man, and belonged to the Panunga section. Unlike other Alchera individuals, it did not perform sacred ceremonies as it travelled along. The first known camping place was at Ilpma in the Strangway Range, and its only food consisted of Udnirringa berries, which form a favourite food of the emu. From Ilpma it travelled south to Udnurringunia, where two eggs were deposited which turned into stone, and are now represented at the spot by two large round black stones. Then it went on to Uknurulinga in the Strangway Range, and thence travelled on till it came to Iralta, where it passed a lot of emu men and women, but, being ashamed of its poor conditions, it did not go near to them. They had *Nurtunjas*, which they carried on their heads. Then it passed Narpipa without seeing the Unjiamba people who dwelt and had sprung up there. Walking on across the Burt

The Arunta

Plain, which lies to the north of the McDonnell Ranges, it came to what is now called Bond Springs, where a number of emu men and women were met who had originated there, and with whom it fraternised for a time. These people, however, did not like it because it was so thin and miserable-looking, so at length they drove it away, and, going on, it camped halfway between Bond Springs and Undoolia, a slender column of stone rising to mark the spot where it camped, and this may be seen to the present day. Travelling on amongst the Ranges, it came to a spot a little to the east of the Jessie Gap, where it deposited its solitary Churinga, from which a Bultara man named Untwarntwa, now living, is descended. At this spot the poor creature become still more emaciated, and finally changed into a large stone, which became charged with *Arungquilta*, or evil influence. In some curious way thinness seems to be especially associated with the latter.

Anyone wishing to injure another person may perform a simple ceremony here, which consists merely in rubbing the stone with the hands while muttering an exhortation to the evil influence to come forth and afflict the person whom he desires to harm. After this has been done the victim will gradually grow thinner and thinner until he withers away altogether.

Another stone close to a large clay-pan not far from Alice Springs marks the spot where a lizard man died in the Alchera. He also was thin and emaciated, and so the stone is charged with *Arungquilta*, which by rubbing and muttering, as just described in the case of the emu stone, may be projected into the body of an enemy.

Amongst other forms of magic the following may also be noticed. Just as the stones marking the spot where the thin animals or men died are associated with magic, so we find the same to hold good in the case of other trees and stones that are associated with special individuals of the Alchera. Near to Charlotte Waters, for example, is a tree which sprang up to mark the spot where a blind man died. This tree is called the *Apera okilchya* – that is, the blind tree – and the spot where it stands the *Tmara okilchya*, or blind camp. Should this be cut down it is supposed that the men of the locality in

The Arunta

which it grows will become blind ; or if anyone wishes to produce blindness in an enemy, alla that he has to do is to go alone to the tree, and while rubbing it mutter his desire and an exhortation to the *Arungquilta* to go forth and afflict his enemy. Along by the side of the Hugh River in the McDonnell Ranges close to Mount Conway is a stone which marks where a blind man of the wild duck totem died ; and here again the same ceremony may be performed. Close also to Temple Bar, a gap in the ranges, is another similar stone.

We may refer here also to the *Ratappa* stones, which are supposed to be full of spirit children, and by means of rubbing which a man can cause them to go out and enter women. These have been fully described elsewhere.

To cause a person to become thin and weak, spittle is put on the tips of the fingers, which are then bunched together and jerked in the direction of the former. This is called *Puliliwuma* or spittle-throwing. Amongst the Ipirra also a form of magic called *Tchinperli* is practised. A short stick is sharpened at both ends and then a number of little bits of flint are fixed on to it all round with resin. The object thus made is charmed by being "sung", and is then pointed at the enemy, who either wastes away or becomes blind. The same tribe also brings about death by placing a tiny flake of flint which has been charmed under the finger-nail. In this position it is carried about until the opportunity occurs of dropping it quietly on to the person whom it is desired to kill, very much in the same way in which the *Mauia* stone is used amongst the Kaitisha.

To produce blindness the Arunta native will sometimes merely point one of the ordinary *Injilla* or pointing-stick, or he will charm a *Chilara* or forehead band, and then present it to his enemy, who after a time loses his sight.

In connection with the question of magic it may be noticed, in conclusion, that a special form, which is widely met with in other Australian tribes, is not practised by the Arunta. We refer to the attempt to injure an enemy by means of

The Arunta

securing and then practising some form of charm upon some part of his person, such as hair or nail clippings. As we have already seen, images or representations of individuals are made with the idea that any hurt done to them is sympathetically felt by their human representatives, and the absence of the particular form of magic referred to is to be associated with the fact that, for some reason, in these tribes, unlike what usually takes place, human hair is regarded as a most valuable form of gift, and, as we have described elsewhere, the disposal of it is regulated by fixed rules. Under these circumstances the idea of the Arunta native on this subject are entirely different from those met with amongst many other savage peoples.¹⁰

¹⁰ In more northern tribes, such as the Katicha and Warramunga, a girl often carries about with her a small lock of hair cut from the head of the man to whom she has been promised.

CHAPTER XVI

Spirit Beliefs

Amongst the Arunta people there is a firm belief in the existence of spirits and spirit individuals between whom and various members of the tribe there exists a very definite relationship. Different names are given to them, as follows : – (1) *Kuruna*, (2) *Iruntarinia*, (3) *Iwupa*, (4) *Ulthana*, (5) *Alknuriniata*, (6) *Arumburinga*. They may be divided into two series, one including the first four, the other the last two.

Kuruna is the name given, in the first instance, to the spirits, one of which was associated with each of the original Churinga in the Alchera. When the Alchera ancestor, to whom the *Kuruna* gave rise after its entrance into an Alchera woman, died, a *Knanja* tree or rock (*rola* or *perta Knanja*) arose to mark the spot. The *Kuruna* of each such Alchera man or woman returned to the *Pertalchera* in which its Churinga was deposited in the Alchera. This original *Kuruna* then split into two ; one half persisted as a new *Kuruna*, or spirit, that could undergo reincarnation, the other gave rise to what is called an *Arumburinga* or “double” of the *Kuruna*. The *Arumburinga* thus formed is everlasting. The natives say, *Kuruna perta Knanja lumma ; chiepa tera kuma ; ni-inda Arumburinga, in-inda Kuruna*, which means, the *Kuruna* goes to the *perta Knanja* (Knanja rock) : it splits into two ; one is the *Arumburinga* ; one is the *Kuruna*.

This splitting of the original *Kuruna* is curiously similar to the belief held amongst the Kakadu tribe on the Alligator River on the far north coast of Australia. In this tribe the belief is that each individual has a spirit part called *Yalmuru* which, when he dies, keeps watch over the bones or *benogra*. After a time the *Yalmuru* divides into two, one half remaining as a new *Yalmuru*, the other forming an *Iwaiyu*, or double of the

The Arunta

Yalmuru. After some time the *Iwaiyu* enters woman and a child is born. Later on the old *Yalmuru* fades away, but before doing this he visits the man to whom the *Iwaiyu* has given rise, telling him, or rather his spirit part, while he sleeps, that he himself is going to pass away, and that he, the *Iwaiyu*, must now take his – that is, the old *Yalmuru's* – place as a new *Yalmuru*. As the Kakadu natives say, *baranga Yalmuru wariji ge*, the old *Yalmuru* is done for completely ; *Iwaiyu nigeri Yalmuru*, the *Iwaiyu* is the new *Yalmuru*.¹¹ When the man dies, his spirit, which has thus taken the place of the old worn out *Yalmuru*, in its turn watches over the bones, and after a time divides, forming again a new *Yalmuru* and *Iwaiyu*, and so on generation after generation. The difference between the Arunta and the Kakadu beliefs is that, in the former, the splitting of the spirit is supposed to have taken place once only in the old Alchera times, and the *Arumburinga* thus formed persists for ever, whilst in the Kakadu the splitting is recurrent and takes place after the death of each individual. Amongst the Arunta people the *Arumburinga* is supposed to watch over the individual who, in human form, is the reincarnation of its “double”, the other half of itself. The *Arumburingas* of men who are closely allied to one another – such, for example, as children of the same father – will take a special interest in all of them. They spend much of their time at the *Pertalchera* watching over the *Churinga* or resting in their *Knanja* tree or rock. Often they accompany their human representative or keep watch over the woman into whom the *Kuruna* has entered, before her child is born. After he, or she, is born, a man's or woman's, *Arumburinga* is not supposed to watch over him, or her, continuously, but only in a more or less general way. The idea in this respect is a vague one ; but if, to take a special example, a man be out hunting and has his eye fixed on his prey, and, for some reason, apparently without any cause, he suddenly looks down and sees a snake, just where he was about to tread, then he knows at once that his *Arumburinga* is with him and prompted him to look down suddenly. On the other hand, *Arumburinga* may be unfriendly. Sometimes one or more of them may wish to make

11 Spencer, “Native tribes, Northern Territory,” p. 274.

The Arunta

a man lose his way in the bush, in which case they will conceal their heads in large bags made by social caterpillars that are often seen hanging on gum trees and acacias, follow him up and make him *erita wideriga* – that is, “silly”. If, however, friendly *Arumburingas* find him, they will lead him back to his camp¹²

The *Arumburinga* can, of course, travel long distances rapidly and with ease, and though they spend most of their time at the *knanja* tree or rock, still, if their human representative lives far away, as he may do, they will often visit him, and, if he be gifted with the power of seeing spirits, will make themselves visible to him, or if he be not, then they sometimes send him a message through a man who is thus gifted.

When a man or woman dies, the spirit part, or *Kuruna*, immediately leaves the body and flies away to its *Pertalchera* in the form of a little bird called *Chichurkna*, whose whistling is often heard when there has been a death in the camp. As soon as it has joined its *Arumburinga* the latter hastens from its *Knanja* tree, or rock, or from its *Pertalchera*, to the grave, to protect the body against attacks by mischievous spirits called *Eruncha*. It remains there until the *Kuru-urkna* or girdle, made of hair cut from the dead man, has been woven. During this short period of perhaps three or four days, it receives the special name of *Alknuriniata*. It then goes back to its *Knanja* tree, and the spirit of the dead man returns to the grave in the form of an *Ulthana* until the final mourning ceremony of *Urpilchimilla* has been held, after which it returns to the *Pertalchera*, and there joins the *Arumburinga* and other spirit beings, assuming once more the form of a *Kuruna* that can enter a woman and be reborn.¹³

The terms *Iruntarinia* and *Iwupa* are used collectively to include all the various forms of spirit beings.

The *Iruntarinia* are especially given to wandering during

12 This again is very similar to the belief held by the Kakadu, Spencer, “Native tribes, Northern Territory,” p. 16

13 The *Knanja* tree, or rock, is always near to the *Pertalchera*, so that the *Arumburinga*, which spends much time in the former, can at the same time keep watch over the *Churinga* in the *Pertalchera*. See also Chapter XVII (Vol. II) for account of burial and mourning ceremonies.

The Arunta

the summer time, as they do not like the cold of the winter nights ; in fact, during the latter period they spend most of their time in underground caves, where are streams of running water and constant sunshine, the two great desiderata of the Arunta native, as the one implies a plentiful food supply, and the other the warmth of which, being himself fond, he naturally supposes that the spirit are so also. Each local group has its group of *Iruntarinia*, who are supposed to be associated with that special locality and its inhabitants, and, of course, bear the name of the Alchera individuals with whom they are, each one, associated – that is, the *Iruntarinia* are aggregated in local totemic groups just as the living members of the tribe are. Close to Alice Springs is an ancient hollow tree which is supposed to form a favourite entrance of the *Iruntarinia* of that district to the caves, which, according to native belief, stretch out for many miles underground.

There are certain other ideas with regard to the spirits or *Iruntarinia* with which we may conveniently deal here.

In addition to the medicine men, who have the power of seeing and communicating generally with the *Iruntarinia*, there are others to whom this privilege is granted who are spoken of as *Atua Iruntarinia*. It is believed that, so say the natives, children who are born with their eyes open, or, as it is called, *alkna buma* (*alkna*, eye; *buma*, open), have this power when they arrive at maturity, provided always that they grow up sedate, for the *Iruntarinia* much dislike scoffers, frivolous people, and chattering men and women, and will not show themselves to such on any account. Men and women who are what is called *irkun oknirra* (*irkun*, chattering; *oknirra*, much) are supposed to annoy the spirits. Children who are born with the eyes closed, *alkna bunga*, cannot communicate with the spirits when they grow up unless they become medicine men.

In general appearance the *Iruntarinia* are supposed to resemble human beings, but they are always youthful-looking, their faces are without hair, and their bodies are thin and shadowy. They are fond of decorating themselves with down or *undattha*, of which they are supposed to have unlimited supplies, some of which, as it is highly prized amongst the

The Arunta

natives, they every now and again present to specially favoured individuals.

As a general rule they only go about at night-time, and only make themselves visible when men or women are alone. They are fond of prowling about the camp, and sometimes, when successful in evading the notice of the camp dogs, who have the gift of seeing them at all times, they steal hair and fur string, or other material, which, after a time, is as mysteriously returned to its owner as it disappeared in the first instance. It is, so the natives say, no uncommon thing for a man to wake in the morning, or even after a sleep in the middle of the day, and find that his spare string has disappeared. He looks around for tracks, but finds none, and at once concludes that the *Iruntarinia* have been visiting him. He must not be angry, or else he would offend them, and, moreover, he feels that his *Arumburinga*, who has most likely taken the string, needed it for some special purpose, and will return it safely when done with. Sooner or later he will awake to find it by his side. What may be the real meaning of this belief it is difficult to see, unless – what is not by any means impossible – the explanation lies in the fact that one of the so-called *Iruntarinia* men has cunningly taken the articles, and then after a time returned them, his object being to keep up the belief in the existence of the spirits, owing to his supposed power of interviewing whom he is held in considerable respect.

The spirit kill and eat all manner of game, but always uncooked, for they are not supposed to have any fires, and not seldom they steal game which has been wounded, but not killed on the spot, by men. For instance, a kangaroo which has been speared, but not killed, will perhaps run away out of sight of the hunter, who tracks it up some time and then loses all trace of it, and when this is so he knows that the *Iruntarinia* have taken it.

It is matter of tradition that now and again they have carried off women have wandered too far from their camp after dark ; in fact, it is not considered safe for a woman to go about too much alone, as there is always the danger of the *Iruntarinia* seizing her and carrying her away to be imprisoned in the depth of a cave. This fear, which is ever

The Arunta

present with the women, acts as a wholesome check upon their wandering about alone. Not very long ago, at a place called Undoolya, a woman strayed some distance from her husband's camp in the dusk, and he was only just in time, when attracted by her cries, to prevent her being carried off by the *Iruntarinia*, who had seized upon and were dragging her away when he came upon the scene.

There is a tradition that long ago, before any of the oldest men now living were born, a party going to the south from the McDonnell Ranges was met at the Edith Range, near to Ooraminna water-hole, about twenty-five miles distant from Alice Springs, by a host of *Iruntarinia*, who drove the party back with great slaughter.

The *Iruntarinia* are also supposed to possess a number of Churinga, which are of both wood and stone, and occasionally they present one or two to specially favoured individuals. The men amongst the natives who, in addition to the medicine men, can communicate with them are held in considerable esteem, and to some of them the spirits impart sacred ceremonies. An example of one of these ceremonies, which is associated with the eagle-hawk totem, is described in connection with the Engwura. Another very characteristic *Iruntarinia* ceremony may be described here, as it is concerned with one of the important features in regard to the character of the spirits and their relation to men. This particular ceremony was shown to a medicine man of the witchetty grub totem by the *Iruntarinia* of a Hakea tree totem, for, as we have already said, the *Iruntarinia* naturally have their totems just as the men do whose doubles they in reality are, though at the same time, unlike the men, the *Iruntarinia* are endowed with the powers characteristic of the Alchera individuals (Fig. 127).

The important feature of the ceremony consisted of a cross, each of the two arms of which was about six feet in length, one being fastened across the other at a distance of eighteen inches from the upper end when it was fixed upright in the ground. There were three performers, decorated as usual with lines of down, and each one of them wore in his head-dress two pointing-sticks or Ullinka, arranged as if they were horns projecting in front. The curious cross is called *Umbalinyara*, and when the

The Arunta

Iruntarinia, whose totem was the same as that of the medicine man's mother, showed it to the man, he hold the latter to go and show it to his companions, and to tell them that no medicine man, however clever he might be, could possibly extract the cross if once the *Iruntarinia* had placed it in the body of a man. At first only one of the performers sat beside the cross and moved about, quivering in the usual way ; then he stood to one side, and, from some little distance, the over two were seen approaching, while the onlookers sang of how the *Iruntarinia* walked about in the Alchera and kept hiding out of sight, as the two performers pretended to do. They were performing all kinds of antics, causing the audience much amusement ; finally they reached and sat down by the cross, round which they shuffled with their legs bent under them ; after a short time the third man joined them, and then the audience rushed round and round them, shouting " *Wha ! Wha !* " until, with a final prolonged quiver, and the usual placing on of hands the performance came to a close.

It is not at all necessary for the *Iruntarinia* to give the ceremony to a man of any particular totem ; but, if the recipient wishes to hand it on as a compliment to some other man, which he frequently does, then that man must belong to the totem to which the ceremony refers.

It is again the *Iruntarinia* who are supposed frequently, but not always or of necessity, to communicate in dreams to the Inkata of any group the time at which it is right for him to perform the ceremony of *Mbanbiuma*. They themselves perform similar ceremonies ; and if a plentiful supply of, say, witchetty grub or emu appears without the performance of *Mbanbiuma* by the peoples of the respective totems, then the supplies are attributed to the performance of *Mbanbiuma* by friendly *Iruntarinia*.

To the native the *Iruntarinia* is a very real personage, who, as a general rule, is a beneficent being, though at times capable of great cruelty ; he is, in fact, a man of the Alchera endowed with all the powers possessed by such an one. If he be offended, then he may place in the body of the offender one of his pointing-sticks, or *Ullinka*, which as a general rule is a barbed stick a few inches in length and attached to a string, the

The Arunta

malicious pulling of which causes severe pain, and the stick can only be removed by the aid of a very skilled medicine man.

There is always the feeling that it is well to be careful not to offend the *Iruntarinia*, or to tempt them by going out too much after dusk, when there is almost sure to be an odd spirit or two in search of lonely wanderers on whom they may at least play some unpleasant prank. On the other hand, the *Arumburinga* is supposed to keep a general watch over his human representative, and though he does not personally do the latter any harm – quite the reverse in fact – yet he cannot always shield him from the capricious malice of some other spirit, who may be able to elude his vigilance.

CHAPTER XVII

Death, Burial and Mourning Ceremonies

There are supposed to be two brothers called *Inchinkinja* an older and a younger one, living in the form of stars in the sky, who are hostile to men and always anxious to make it quite certain that a native, when seriously ill, shall die. When it is evident that death is near at hand, they come down to earth. It is said of them, *Inka inbumilla Inkalikuma*, the *Inchinkinja* stamps his foot ; *iltcha yitta inkalikuma*, pinches the throat with his fingers. When, for example, the Inkata Achilpa oknirra was dying, the tradition says that he was lying on the ground with his *Anua* on his right side and his *Allira* (daughter) and *Quia umba* (sister's daughter) on his left. When, for example, the Inkata Achilpa oknirra was dying, the tradition says that he was lying on the ground with his *Anua* on his right side and his *Allira* (daughter) and *Quia umba* (sister's daughter) on his left. The three lubras were crying, and the two *Inchinkinja* men, hearing the noise, came down. The older man said, *Kudjja oknirra urknirama*, the crowd of children play about, but the younger man said, *Illkata atua ni-inda*, bad man one, which meant that he saw one man who was very ill. Then he said *Ta irrijigga*, I go ; *iwunna naira ?* What is the matter *Ta arukala*, I go in front ; *ilkata oknirra*, he is very bad ; *indamulla*, he is lying down ; *kulla illitikka*, he is dead all right. The younger man then went on, put his foot on the man's chest and pinched his throat with his fingers. In addition to these two *Inchinkinja*, there is an evil-minded spirit called *Eruncha oknirra urupurra*, who is also on the look-out to harm the dying and also the dead man. When the *Inchinkinja* have done what they can, they still keep watch lest the man should rise from his grave. The natives say, *Inka*, foot ; *inbumilla*, stamp ; *yitta*, throat ; *Inchinkinja* ; *iltcha*, fingers ; *inkalilikama*, destroy or finish, which means that after the *Inchinkinja* has stamped on the dying man and choked him, they call the *Eruncha* to help them? The dead man is supposed to be rising

The Arunta

from his grave, and if his head appears above the ground, the *Eruncha* comes up. The following is their description of what is supposed to take place. *Inka*, foot ; *inbumilla*, stamps ; *mornja*, softly ; so that he does not feel it ; *yitta*, neck ; *urumparilla*, spear ; *tantamma*, strikes him ; *unta*, you ; *wetta kuma eritchikka*, not get up altogether ; *rulla*, sand or ground ; *ertchikka*, altogether ; *rera-rera mulla kurta*, like roots matted together. The meaning of this is that the *Ezruncha* comes up, puts his foot gently on the man's neck as he tries to come out of the grave and then spears him, telling him to go down altogether. The sand then gets matted closely round the head and clings to it just like it does to roots.

When a man dies his spirit, or *Kuruna*, comes out ; *Atua*, man ; *illumunga*, dies ; *illum*, walks ; *Chichurkna*, a whistling bird ; *alkira wunna*, up in the sky. His *Kuruna* flies away in the form of a whistling bird called Chichurkna.¹⁴ As soon as this takes place, the *Arumburinga* comes from its Knanja tree or stone or from the *Pertalchera* (these are always close together) to keep watch over the body in the grave. It is now called *Alknuriniata*. If it sees the *Eruncha* coming it says to itself, *Eruncha urupurra pitchimunga*, the *Eruncha* is coming up : *Yinja ewulla*, I hide myself ; *Eruncha kurna erimunga*, I see the bad *Eruncha*. When the *Eruncha* is close up he comes out and shouts *Eruncha kurna, Lai ! Lai !* – go away ! Go away ! *Tutumitcha*, I kill (you).

The *Kuruna*, now called *Ulthana*, stop away at the *Pertalchera* until the *Kuru-urkna*, or girdle made from the dead man's hair, has been prepared. It then returns to the grave and remains hovering around until the end of the *Urpilchimilla* ceremony. The *Alknuriniata*, or *Arumburinga*, meanwhile goes back to the *Pertalchera*, where it is finally joined by the *Ulthana*, which, once more, is spoken of as a *Kuruna*.

When referring to an old man or woman, who is evidently near to death, the natives use certain expression such as *Umbai-erinilla*, close up done : *Porka oknirra*, very tired or worn out : *Illitchikka kulla, koinyu punna*, ready to die, poor old thing. They will say to a very old man who has been

14 The members of an avenging party who have killed their victim have to listen carefully at night for the whistling of the Chichurkna, the spirit of the dead man being supposed to follow them up in bird form.

The Arunta

recognised as an Oknirrabata, *Koinyu punna Oknirrabata*, poor old *Oknirrabata: yinga undorgninima* ;I very sorry : *arukalinia*, born first ; *knanikilla tmara oknirra*, big Oknanikilla camp ; *kurinukwa*, your place ; *kulla*, all right ; *walgna*, grave ; *chichikka*, bury or cover. That is, I am very sorry, poor old man *Oknirrabata*, your Knanikilla was before mine (i.e. you had your totem place before I was born), you have a very big camp in your country, we will bury you there all right.

A dying man is surrounded in camp by his mother, his mother's brothers, his sons, and sister's sons and sisters. When he is actually dying, when, as the natives say, "his eye goes," then an elder brother (*Kullia*) and mother's brother (*Gammona*) lift his legs up and fix him in position. The dead man (*atua erilgna*) is immediately carried away to the grave, called *walgna*, by the side of which the hair is cut from his head, by his sons, if present, or if none be there, by the younger brothers or their sons. While this is being done the women and children retire out of sight. The body is then placed in a sitting position with the knees doubled up against the chin, and is thus interred in a round hole in the ground, with the face looking toward the dead man's or woman's camping place in the Alchera – that is, the *Tmara Alchera*. A depression is left on the same side of the mound so that the *Ulthana* can pass in and out of it if it wishes to visit the body. Until the final burial ceremony has been enacted, the *Ulthana* is supposed to spend part of the time in the grave, part in watching over its relatives, and part in the company of the *Arumburinga*, its spirit double, who lives at the Knanja camp where the man's Churinga is kept in the *Pertalchera*. Shortly after the burial the hair is taken away to a secluded spot and made into the waist-girdle called *Kuru-urkna*. The man's *Immitnia* and *Kulchia* – that is, his opossum fur string girdle and head bands – are also preserved for further use.¹⁵ The man's or woman's camp is at once burnt down, all the contents being destroyed. The whole of the local encampment is shifted to a new place. There is always a restless, almost an uncanny, feeling in the camp for some time after a death has taken place. Very often,

15 These and the *Kuru-urkna* are dealt with in connection with Magic, Chapter XV. (Vol. II, p. 405).

The Arunta

indeed, the natives scatter over the country. They feel that the spirit of the dead man is hovering around, and possibly also the *Eruncha urupurra* or a *Kurdaitcha*. The slightest unusual noise at night alarms them, and it is some time before the camp returns to its normal state.

It is generally supposed that amongst Australian natives the name of a dead man is never mentioned. This is not, however, strictly true as regards the Arunta tribe. There are various degrees of silence to be observed by different persons, and these are dependant upon the mutual relationship which existed between the dead and living individual. During the period of mourning which follows immediately upon the death of a man and occupies a period of from twelve to eighteen months no person must mention the name of the deceased except it be absolutely necessary to do so, and then only in a whisper, for fear of disturbing and annoying the man's spirit, which, in ghost form, or, as they call it, *Ulthana*, walks about. If the *Ulthana* hears his name mentioned, he comes to the conclusion that his relatives are not properly mourning for him – if their grief were genuine it would cause them to much pain to hear his name mentioned to allow them to do so – and so he will come and trouble them in their sleep, to show them that he is not pleased with them.

All individuals who are *Kullia*, *Oknia*, *Mia*, *Ungaraitcha*, *Uwinna*, or *Mura* of the dead man or woman may never mention his or her name, nor may they ever go near to the grave when once the ceremony of *Urpmilchimilla*, shortly to be described, has been performed. Those who were *Allira*, *Itia*, *Umbirna*, *Umba*, *Unkulla*, *Anua*, *Irundera Chimmia*, or *Arunga* may, when the time of mourning is over, speak of the dead and mention his name without fear of incurring the anger or the *Ulthana*. As a matter of fact, the grave is very seldom indeed visited by anyone for a long time after the burial ; no camp will be formed close to where a grave has been made for at least two years' time, for fear of disturbing the *Ulthana*.

The Gammona of the deceased – that is, the men who may lawfully marry his daughters – whether they actually do so or not makes no difference – must not only never mention

The Arunta

his name, but they neither attend the actual burial, nor do they take any part in the subsequent mourning ceremonies which are carried on at the grave. It is their duty to cut themselves on the shoulders when the man who is their *Irundera* or father-in-law dies. If a son-in-law does not well and faithfully perform this cutting rite, which is called *Unangara*, then some *Irundera* will punish him by giving away his special *Anua* or wife to some other man to appease the *Ulthana* of the dead father-in-law.

The name of the latter is strictly tabu to the *Gammona* and if by any chance he should hear the name mentioned in camp, he will at once rattle his boomerangs together so as to prevent his knowing what is being said.

Every man bears on his shoulders, as will be seen clearly in many of the illustrations, the raised cicatrices, which exist as the permanent record of the fact that he has fulfilled his duty to a dead father-in-law.

When a man dies, his special *Anua* or *Anuas* smear their hair, faces and breasts with white pipeclay, and remain silent for a certain time, until a ceremony called *Aralkililima* has been performed. The widow is called *Inpirita*, which means the whitened one in reference to the pipeclay. Sometimes she smears over the pipeclay ashes from a fire. In some of the more northern tribes, as, for example, amongst the Warramunga living on Tennant's Creek, the widows are not allowed to speak for sometimes as long a period as twelve months, during the whole of which time they communicate only by means of gesture language. In the latter they are so proficient that they prefer, even when there is no obligation upon them to do so, to use it in preference to speaking. Not seldom, when a party of women are in camp there will be almost perfect silence, and yet a brisk conversation is all the while being conducted on their fingers, or rather with their hands and arms, as many of the signs are made by putting the hands, or perhaps the elbows, in varying positions. Many of the positions assumed by the fingers are such that it is not at all easy for a white man to imitate them, and yet by long practice the native can place his fingers in the most wonderful

The Arunta

variety of positions with regard to one another, and at the same time move them about in a way which no white man can, except with extreme difficulty and very slowly.

When the widow wishes the ban of silence to be removed, she gathers a large wooden vessel, called a *Terna*, full of some edible seed or small tuber, and smears herself afresh with white pipeclay at the *Lukwurra*, or women's camp, where she has been living since her husband's death. Carrying the *Terna*, and accompanied by the women whom she has gathered together for the purpose, she walks to the centre of the encampment midway between the two sections of the community – that is, to the creek or whatever natural feature it may be which serves to divide the Bultara and Panunga moiety from the Kumara and Purula in ordinary camps. Here they all sit down and cry loudly, whereupon the men who were the *Allira* and *Itia* – that is, the sons and younger brothers of the dead man (blood and tribal) – come up and join the party. The men take the *Terna* from the hands of the widow and, as many as possible taking hold of it, they shout loudly “*Wha ! wha ! wha !*” The women except the widow stop crying and join in the shout. After a short time the *Terna* is held close to, but not touching, the face of the widow, and passes are made to right and left of her cheeks, while all again shout “*Wha ! wha ! Wha !*” the widow now stops her crying and utters the same shout, only in subdued tones. After a few minutes the *Terna* is passed to the rear of the men, who now, squatting on the ground and holding their shields in both hands, strike them heavily on the ground in front of the women who are standing. The widow springs to her feet and joins in the shouts of “*Wha ! wha ! wha !*” which accompany for some minutes the striking of the shields. When this is over the men disperse to their camps and eat the food brought in the *Terna* by the widow, who is now free to speak to them, though she still continues to smear herself with pipeclay. The meaning of this ceremony, that the widow is about to resume the ordinary occupations of a woman's life, which have been to a large extent suspended while she remained in camp in what we may call deep mourning. It is, in fact, closely akin in feeling to the transition from deep

The Arunta

to narrow black-edged paper amongst certain more highly civilised peoples. The offering to the sons and younger brothers is intended both to show them that she has properly carried out the first period of mourning and to gain their goodwill, as they, especially the younger brothers, are supposed to be for some time displeased with a woman when her husband is dead and she is alive. In fact a younger brother meeting the wife of a dead elder brother out in the bush, performing the ordinary duties of a woman, such as hunting for “yams”, within a short time of her husband's death, would be quite justified in spearing her. The only reason that the natives give for this hostile feeling is that it grieves them too much when they see the widow, because it reminds them of the dead man. This, however, can scarcely be the whole reason, as the same rule does not apply to the elder brothers, and very probably the real explanation of the feeling is associated, in some way, with the custom according to which the widow will, when the final stage of mourning is over, become the wife of one of these younger brothers whom at first she has carefully to avoid.

After the lapse of perhaps twelve or eighteen months the ceremony of *Urpilchimilla* is performed at the grave. The meaning of this term is “trampling the twigs on the graves.”

Previously to this the widow has been saving up small bones of any animal, such as the jaws of opossums or rabbit-kangaroos, or leg and arm bones of various small animals. She also procures the same from her tribal sisters. From the female *Itia*, *Allira* and *Umba* of the dead man she obtains short locks of hair, to which, by means of *Atcha*, the resin obtained from the porcupine grass, she attaches firmly the bones, which are then hung on, in a little groups, to one of the hair head rings which are commonly worn by women. In addition she procures *Alita* and makes plumes out of the tail feathers of the ring-necked parrot or of the black cockatoo. In this way a hideous and bulky chaplet is made, which the women call *Aramurillia* and the men *Chimurillia* – why they should have separate names we cannot say, but they are both applied to the same chaplet and have nothing to do

The Arunta

with whether it is concerned with the *Urpmilchimilla* of a man or woman (Fig. 128, 129).

When these preparations have been made, the widow is invited by a younger brother of the dead man to visit the grave or *Walgna*, and there to take part in the ceremony of *Urpmilchimilla*. The date is determined by the tribal brothers and sons of the dead man, and on the appointed day the widow is painted all, or nearly all, over with fresh pipeclay.

Probably in different parts of the tribe the ceremony varies to a certain extent in details, and it may also vary somewhat according to whether the dead man was held in great or little esteem. The following is an account of the *Urpmilchimilla* as it was celebrated in the case of the brother of the present Alatunja of the Alice Springs group. The women, on the appointed day, were assembled at the *Lukwurra* painting the widow; the men were sitting a few hundred yards away on the line of route from the camp to the grave. The *Oknia*, *Kullia*, *Itia* and *Allira* were painted, of course, in pipeclay, white being the colour of mourning. The *Gammona* sat apart with bent heads, and nearest to them were their *Allira* – that is their sons, blood and tribal. When the painting of the widow was complete, the women approached from the *Lukwurra*, uttering their peculiar mournful wail, a weird sound well known to all who have spent the night camped near to a group of natives amongst whom a death has occurred at all recently. The lead was taken by the widow, who was carrying the *Chimurillia* in a wooden *pitchi*. They came on until the spot was reached at which the *Gammona* were seated, and approached in such a way as to come up behind the latter. Then, standing behind each man, the widow thrust the *pitchi* under the arms and on to the lap of each one in turn. There it was allowed to remain, held by the man for some minutes, the women crying loudly and the men with bent heads shedding tears, but uttering no sound. As the *pitchi* rested on the lap of each man, the widow and other women who were *Anua* to the dead man, and who were, in consequence, *Mura* to the *Gammona*, embraced the latter from behind. These women were, it must be remembered, those who are strictly prohibited from

The Arunta

speaking to or having any intercourse with the men in question, to whom they were tribally mothers-in-law, which will account for the fact that they approached them from behind, as if in recognition of this mutual relationship of *Mura*. After this was over the sons of the *Gammona* were treated in just the same way, and then these two sets of men remained seated on the ground while all the other men, followed by the women, started off for the grave. About midway the party was met by the eldest son of the deceased's eldest brother, and a half was made. Taking the *Chimurillia* – two in number – from the *pitchi*, he approached each man who was *Oknia*, *Kullia*, *Itia*, *Irundera*, *Umbirna*, and *Allira* of the dead man, and embraced them all in turn, pressing as he did so the *Chimurillia* against their stomachs. Then he placed one *Chimurillia* on the head of the widow (Fig. 128), and the other on that of a younger sister of the dead man, and taking from the *pitchi* some *Oknicha-lanina* or fur string rings, he tore the string tags off and placed the rings on the heads of women who were *Allira* or *Umba* of the dead man. The tufts of feathers of the ring-necked parrot were stuck in the hair behind the ears over which hung *Alpita* or tail tips of the rabbit-bandicoot.

When the putting on the *Chimurillia*, etc., was complete, the party, led by the man who had superintended this part of the proceedings, went on, each man carrying a shield and spear-thrower. No words were spoken, and the only sound was the wailing of the women. A visit was first paid to the camp where the man died, and, dancing round the charred remains (when a native dies his camp is at once destroyed by fire), they all shouted, “*Wha ! wha ! wha ! Wha-a-a !*” the men as they did so beating the air with their spear-throwers, which were grasped in the centre instead of at one end, and held with their hollow side outwards – suggestive somewhat of the reversed arms at a military funeral. The shields were held at rest in the left hand. The women joined in the dancing and shouting, beating the air with the palms of their hands, which faced away from the body with the fingers widely distended, the idea being to drive the spirit away from the old camp which it is supposed to haunt. Those women who were *Mia*, *Uwinna*, and *Mura* of the dead man did not join in the shouting,

The Arunta

or make any movement with the arms, but wailed loudly and threw themselves on to the ground. When the dancing, which lasted about ten minutes, was over, the whole party proceeded to the grave at a run, the leader making a circuit away from the main party, shouting loudly with very prolonged intonation, "*Ba-au ! ba-au !*" The idea of the leading man making a circuit was, perhaps, though the natives could give no explanation, to prevent the spirit from doubling back to the camp from which they were supposed to be driving him. The idea is that the spirit is frightened when he hears the noise and sees the widow coming on wearing the *Chimurillia*, and, being driven on, takes refuge at the bottom of the grave. The main party went on shouting in suppressed tones, "*Wha ! wha !*" the men keeping time by beating the air with their spear-throwers, held as previously described while the women followed behind.

The leader, who had been running more rapidly than the rest, arrived at the grave just before the others, and with a final and much-prolonged "*Ba-au !*" jumped on the grave into which the spirit was supposed to have fled and began dancing wildly. He was quickly followed by the others, all of whom, except the *Mia*, *Uwinna*, and *Mura* women, who lay down on the ground close by, began to dance backwards and forwards on and around the grave shouting, "*Wha ! wha !*" and beating the air downwards as if to drive the spirit down, while with their feet they stamped upon and broke the twigs with which a newly-made grave is always covered. When these were thoroughly broken up the dancing ceased, the men separated from the women and went to one side, while the widow and other women cleared up the *débris*, which was carried a little distance away from the grave, immediately around which a space was cleared for a few yards. When this had been done, the *Mia*, *Uwinna*, and *Mura* women, who had meanwhile been lying prostrate, wailing at the top of their voices, and struck and cut their heads with fighting-clubs, inflicting on themselves often severe wounds, from which the blood flowed on the grave. After a little time cutting

The Arunta

ceased and they moved away. The men stood solemnly one side while the widow came forward with her sisters, blood and tribal, and scratched a hole in the top of the grave. When this was deep enough the widow and the younger woman took the *Chimurillia* off their heads and, while all the women cried loudly, tore them to pieces, and, kneeling over the grave, deposited the remains in the hole. This done, the fur string rings were treated in the same way, the feather tufts and *Alpita* were placed in the hole, above these was put the *pitchi*, in which the *Chimurillia* had been carried, and then the earth was heaped up. When this had been done the men prostrated themselves for a few minutes on the grave. When they got up their place was taken by the widow and other *Anua* women, and lastly the *Mia*, *Uwinna*, and *Mura* women came and lay down.

After this was over, the widow, standing by the grave, rubbed off the white pipeclay from her body, thus the grave, that her mourning was at an end. She may still, if she likes, paint a narrow white band on her forehead, which is regarded as an intimation that she is not anxious to marry at present, as she still mourns, though to a less degree than before, for the dead man.

The spirit of the dead man was supposed to have been watching all these proceedings as he lay at the bottom of the grave. From the fact of the widow's having painted herself with white, and having made and worn the *Chimurillia*, he knows that he has been properly mourned for, while the fact of her wearing in her hair the gay feathers of the ring-neck parrot shows him that her period of mourning has come to an end. Having had similar experiences during his own lifetime he recognises that, with the *Chimurillia*, she buries the sorrow of herself and of his relatives and friends. The loud shouting of the men and women shows him that they do not wish to be frightened by him in his present state, and that they will be angry with him if he does not rest. Should he at any time forget the wishes of the survivors, then the presence of the broken-up *Chimurillias* will remind him of them. He may still watch over his friends, guard them from harm, and visit them in dreams, but he must not come in such a way as to frighten them.

The Arunta

In the case of every grave, it may here be noted that the earth is always heaped up especially on one side ; the side on which it is less heaped up, or on which sometimes a slight depression is left, is always the one facing towards the place at which, in the Alchera, the ancestor of the man lived and at which his spirit double, or *Arumburinga*, whom the *Ulthana* now goes to join, has lived ever since.

In the case of the *Urpmilchimilla* of a woman the proceedings are somewhat different, and the following describes what took place at one which was held some twelve months after the death of a woman at Alice Springs.

All the women in the camp assembled at the *Lukwurra* shortly after sunrise. The actual mother of the deceased was painted deeply all over with pipeclay, the tribal *Mias* were painted with the same material, but to a lesser extent ; the *Ungaraitcha* had bands of white across the foreheads and chest, the *Uwinnas* were painted with dry yellow ochre on the body and head, and had also white bands across the forehead. After about ten minutes had been spent in embracing one another, while a continuous wailing was kept up, a start was made for the grave. After going a short distance they were met by a man who was a blood brother of the dead woman and was accompanied by a number of his tribal brothers. Everyone sat down and the lamenting again began. The *Ungaraitcha*, who carried the *pitchi* containing the *Chimurillias*, handed it to the brother, who bowed his head over it while he pressed it against his stomach for a minute or two, after which he removed one of the *Chimurillias* and placed it upon his mother's head (Fig. 128). After it had been worn by the woman for a short time she replaced it in the *pitchi* , which was then taken by the *Ungaraitcha* and pressed against the stomach of each man in turn, the idea being to assuage their sorrow. The *Chimurillias* were then taken by the brother and placed on the head of two tribal *Ungaraitcha* of the dead woman, and the party started for the grave, led, but only for a short distance, by the brother, all the other men remaining behind. No man is allowed to attend the *Urpmilchimilla* of a woman.

On the way to the grave the mother often threw herself

The Arunta

heavily on the ground and attempted to cut her head with a digging-stick. Each time she did so she was picked up by two women, whose duty it appeared to be to prevent her from hurting herself too much ; but by the time that the grave was reached her body was a mass of bruises and covered over with sharp, three-cornered prickles. At the grave she threw herself upon it, tearing up the earth with her hands and being literally danced upon by the other women. Then all the *Mias* and *Uwinnas* threw themselves on the grave, the *Mias* cutting and hitting each other about the body until they were streaming with blood. Each of them carried a digging-stick, which was used unsparingly on its owner's head and on those of the others, no one attempting to ward off the blows, which they even invited. Amongst the *Mias* was an aged cripple, who was carried to the ground, and was one of the most keen participators in the ceremony. The *Uwinnas*, though hard hit, were not cut as were the *Mias*. After some time the other women dragged the *Mias* and *Uwinnas* away, and then the *Ungaraitcha* scraped a hole in the earth in which, after tearing them up, the *Chimurillias* were deposited. Once more the *Mias* threw themselves on the grave, cutting each other's heads. The weeping and wailing of the women who were standing round seemed to drive them almost frenzied, and the blood, streaming down their bodies over the white pipeclay, gave them a ghastly appearance. At last only the old mother was left crouching alone, utterly exhausted and moaning weakly on the grave. The *Ungaraitcha* approached her, and, rubbing off the pipeclay, lifted her up. After this the ceremony came to an end and the grave was smoothed down and left.

No *Mia* would think of being absent from an *Urpmilchimilla* ceremony, which, though the Australian native cannot be supposed to feel pain as acutely as the average white man does, must yet involve no small amount of physical suffering. The women seem to work themselves up into a perfect frenzy, and to become quite careless as to the way in which they cut and back themselves about, with, however, this restriction, notable on all such occasions, that however frenzied they apparently become, no vital part is injured, the cutting

The Arunta

being confined to such parts as the shoulders, scalps, and legs.

To those who have had no personal contact with savages, such as the Australian natives, and have never seen them at times when they are excited by the performance of ceremonies, the carrying out of which forms a most important feature in their lives, the above account may appear to be exaggerated. It is not for a moment to be supposed that the self-inflicted pain and the loud lamentings are to be taken as a measure of the grief actually felt. To a certain extent, perhaps to a very large one, the excessive display is due to the fact that it is a tribal custom. There is nothing to which a blackfellow is so sensitive as to the contempt and ridicule, of his fellows, to which non-compliance with a custom such as this will expose him. Partly, also, must be taken into account of grief be displayed, he will be harmed by the offended *Ulthana*, or spirit of the dead man. In many respects the mind of the Australian native is like that of a child amongst ourselves. One moment he will be in a passion of grief or rage, and the next, if anything attracts his fancy, his humour will rapidly change and tears will give place to laughter. At the same time he is certainly capable of genuine grief and real affection for his children.

It may finally be pointed out that, in connection with the custom of painting the body of the mourner with white pipeclay, there is no idea of concealing from the spirit of the dead person the identify of the mourner ; on the other hand, the idea is to render him or her conspicuous, and so to allow the spirit to see that it is being properly mourned for.

CHAPTER XVIII

Atinga or Avenging Party

The parties organised to avenge the death of a native or to punish a man guilty of breaking tribal law, such as taking possession of a woman of the wrong class, vary in their organisation and procedure. In some cases the attackers, fully armed with spears and spear-throwers, shields and boomerangs, so as to look as imposing as possible; march to the enemy's camp. The quarrel may either be confined to a wordy warfare, lasting perhaps for an hour or two, after which things quiet down and all is over, or, after consultation, the culprits may be treacherously speared with the connivance of their camp companions. In other cases again – and these are the more serious and elaborate affairs – the attacking party is organised with much ceremony, and carries out its work stealthily, so that the enemy is taken unawares.

The two following cases represent typical examples.

In the first the men living in the country round about Alice Springs in the McDonnell Range were summoned by *Inwurra* – that is, properly accredited messengers carrying Churinga who had been sent out by the Alatunia of the group to assemble for the purpose of making an attack upon the Iliaura tribe, which occupies the country between eighty and a hundred miles to the north of the Ranges.

For a long time the northern groups of the Arunta tribe had been in fear of the Iliaura, who had been continually sending in threatening messages, or at least it was constantly reported that they were doing so, for it must be remembered that imagination plays a large part in matters such as these amongst the natives. Several deaths, also, which had taken place amongst the Arunta, had been attributed by the medicine men to the evil magic of certain of the Iliaura men. When

The Arunta

the messengers and the men summoned had assembled at Alice Springs, a council of the elder men was held, at which it was determined to make a raid on the Iliaura, and accordingly a party was organised for the purpose. Such an avenging party is called an Atinga.

When all was prepared the Atinga started away for the north, and, after travelling for several days, came upon a group of Iliaura men, consisting of about a dozen families, near to whom they camped for two days.

As usual on such occasions, the Iliaura sent some of their women over to the strangers' camp, but the fact that the use of the women was declined by the visitors at once indicated that the mission of the latter was not a friendly one. The women are offered with a view of conciliating the Atinga men, who, if they accept the favour; indicate by so doing that the quarrel will not be pursued any further.

In the Iliaura community were two old men, and with them matters were discussed by the elder men amongst the Arunta at a spot some little distance from the camp of the latter. After a long talk extending over two days, during which the strangers set forth their grievances and gave the Iliaura men very clearly to understand that they were determined to exact vengeance, the two old men said, in effect, "Go no further. Our people do not wish to quarrel with your people ; there are three bad men in our camp whom wa Iliaura do not like, they must be killed. Two are *Iturka* (that is, men who have married within the forbidden degrees of relationship) ; the other is very quarrelsome and strong in magic and has boasted of killing your people by means of Kurdaitcha and other magic. Kill these men, but do not injure any other in our camp, and we will help you,"

These terms were accepted by the Arunta, and it was agreed between the old men of the two parties that an attempt should be made to kill the three men on the exact day. At daylight the old men of the Iliaura went some little distance away from their camp, and there made a fire, and called up the intended to surprise kill the men who have been condemned and handed over to the tender mercies of their enemies, is

The Arunta

called *Thara* (the ordinary word for fire being *Ura*). At the Atinga camp another fire, also called *Thara*, was lighted at the same time. Shortly after daylight a number of the Arunta, led by an old man, went over the *Thara* of the Iliaura, all of them being unarmed, and here they took special care to engage the condemned men in conversation. The remainder of the Atinga party in full war-paint, with whittled sticks in their hair, their bodies painted with red ochre, carrying spears, boomerangs, and shields, and each one wearing the magic *Kuru-urkna* or girdle made of a dead man's hair, crept up unseen and, suddenly springing up, speared two of the condemned men from behind. The third man – one of the two *Iturka* – had grown suspicious during the night, and had accordingly decamped, taking his women with him.

A large number of spears were thrown into the bodies of the men who were killed. When they were dead the Atinga party danced round the bodies, and taking the whittles sticks or *Ilkunta* from their heads, broke them up and threw the pieces on to the bodies. These *Ilkunta* are always worn by certain groups of the Northern Arunta when they really mean to fight, and amongst the same natives also, under these circumstances, little curved flakes are cut by means of flints on their spears about a foot from the pointed end.

The Iliaura men looked on quietly while the killing took place, and when all was over, the spears were taken out of the bodies by the men of the Arunta who had acted as decoys, and were handed back to their respective owners. It is supposed that if the latter themselves removed them some great evil would befall them, as the body of a victim and anything in contact it killed in this way is strictly tabu to the killer.

When this had been done, the Arunta went to the main camp of the Iliaura and took the *Anua* of one of the dead men, and she became and is now the property of the old man who seized her, she being a woman of the section into which he could lawfully marry. One girl child was annexed by one of the younger men, who carried her on his back for the greater part of the return journey for about 100 miles. The two women who belonged to the *Iturka* man were away, but no

The Arunta

attempt was made to capture them, as being themselves *Iturka*, they would not be taken as wives by the men of the avenging party. They would, when captured, meet with severe punishment at the hands of the Iliaura men, and in all probability would be put to death. Had they been the proper *Anua* of the dead man, they would, if present, have been appropriated by men of the Atinga party to whom they were also *Anua*. The special name of *Immirinja* is given to the men who actually took part in the spearing, those who acted as decays, and who thus took only a passive part, being called *Alknarinika*, which means "onlookers".

This killing of *Iturka* men by strange blacks belonging to other tribes had been a common practice amongst them. When a case of this kind arises, the old men of the group to which the offender belongs hold a meeting to discuss the matter, and if all of them are in favour of the death of a man or woman, a neighbouring group is asked to come and carry out the sentence. Sometimes it is agreed that the offending parties are to be punished in some less severe way, perhaps by cutting the man's legs or by burning the woman with a fire-stick, and then, if after this the two still continue to live together, the death penalty will be carried out.

Sometimes, but only rarely, a man is strong enough to resist, but even if he be successful his life is at best a miserable one, as he dare not come anywhere near the camps, but is forced to live in inaccessible parts in constant fear of being surprised and put to death.

At Charlotte Waters, for example, there has been in recent years a case of this kind. One of the finest men of the group carried off a woman who was not his lawful *Anua*, both the man and the woman belonging to the Purula section. For two or three years the two led a wandering life away from the usual haunts and several attempts were made to kill them, the woman being very severely wounded on one occasion. The man, however, was a formidable antagonist of well-known prowess, and after having killed two of the men who attempted to punish him, and nearly killing the proper husband of the woman, it was thought best

The Arunta

to leave him alone, though up to the present day when quarrels occur in which he is concerned he is often taunted with being *Iturka*.

During the time that we spent amongst the Arunta at Alice Springs, in the month of May 1901, we were fortunate enough to witness the despatch and return of another Atninga or avenging party. Some few months earlier an Alice Springs native had died, and his death was attributed by the medicine men to the fact that he had been killed by the evil magic of a man living some 130 miles away to the north-west. Accordingly, while a large number of men were gathered together, advantage was taken of the occasion to organise an avenging party. One day, while the men were seated on the ground in the bed of the creek, the brother of the dead man brought up the *kuru-urkna* or girdle made out of the dead man's hair. Carrying this under his arm-pit, he went in turn to each man, and kneeling down in front of him placed his penis in succession in the hand of every man and had it rubbed. This ceremony is called *paira irripurinnia*. Then he took the *kuru-urkna* from his arm-pit and pressed it against the stomach of each man – a ceremony called *kuru-urkna illura illirima*. The idea of this again is to make them strong in fighting, and the pledge them to take part in the avenging party which was thus organised. That night was spent in the camp making and singing over the *ilkunta* or flaked stick which the men were to wear in their hair while on the war-path.

Early the next morning the men, armed with spears, boomerangs, and shields, and wearing the *ilkunta* or flaked sticks, came dancing up the bed of the creek in the form of a solid square, pausing every few minutes as they approached in a sinuous line (Fig. 130). The leader, the brother of the dead man, every now and then ran round and round the party pretending, as he did so, to hurl his spear at an imaginary foe, in imitation of the way in which, later on, he intended to spear the culprit? After having traversed a distance of about a mile in this way, the party came to a halt, the spears were fixed upright in the ground, and everyone sat down in perfect silence. In a short time they were joined by some of the older men, and about an hour later they rose to their

The Arunta

feet and soon went on to the ceremonial ground some distance away amongst the hills, out of sight of the main camp and the women and children. Here all of the men in camp were gathered together and a series of ceremonies called *atninga unterrima* was performed. First of all, holding only shields in their hands, they formed into a solid square at one end of the ground, and, with the usual high knee action, come rushing along for about 200 yards, when they wheeled round and returned to their starting-place. Laying aside their shields and taking boomerangs, which they held behind their necks with both hands, they went through the same movement, and finally, laying their boomerangs down, each man took his spear, and with these held aloft they rushed backwards and forwards, led on by the brother of the dead man (Fig. 131).

The men then sat down on the ground. Those who were actually going to take part in the expedition, one by one went round the seated group and had their thighs rubbed by the others in order to make them lithe and active (Fig. 132). Whilst this was in progress the leader of the expedition went to each man, and placing one end of the waist-girdle made out of the hair of the dead man on the penis and the other end in the mouth of the man, embraced him (Fig. 133). The idea of this is that some influence passes over from the hair of the dead man to the individual with whom it comes into contact, making his inward parts burn with eagerness to avenge the murder.

On all *Atninga*, such as this, a considerable number *Kuru-urkna* are carried. Each has the spirit of a dead man associated with it, and is supposed to watch over and help the owner to avoid spears. He talks to it, calling it *ilquatera nukwa*, my mate, and saying, *Tula tunija*, they might kill me ; by which is meant that he asks its assistance. The leader carries the special *Kuru-urkna* made from hair of the man whose death they are avenging.

After this there was a pause for a few minutes, and then all of the men stood up, opened veins in their penes by means of sharp flakes or pointed sticks, and, standing opposite to one another, allowed the blood to spurtle out over each other's thighs. This gruesome ceremony is supposed both

The Arunta

to strengthen those who take part in it, and at the same time to blind them still more closely together and to make anything like treachery impossible.

Finally, the spears which were to be used on the expedition were bundled together and held upright by two old men who rattle them vigorously, while all of the others danced round with their boomerangs held behind their heads (Fig. 134). Then the men who were going to take part in the spearing performed a dance with their hands clasped behind their heads (Fig. 135).

Previous to this a man had been chosen who was called, for the time being, by the name of the culprit whom they intended to kill and whom he therefore represented. He was in the middle of the little group. Suddenly he lay down and the others fell prostrate on him (Fig. 136). This was supposed to represent his being speared and killed. The natives said, *Irra-wia* (mob of spears) ; *loenba* (all sticking out) ; *indainukulla* (speared) ; *itmilla illuma* (fall down) ; *illumulla* (dead).

Rising to their feet, each member of the party took his shield, spear, and boomerang, and off they started as cheerfully as if they were setting out upon a pleasure trip.

When two or three days out from camp the men made a small earth mound, *rulla* (Fig. 137 B),

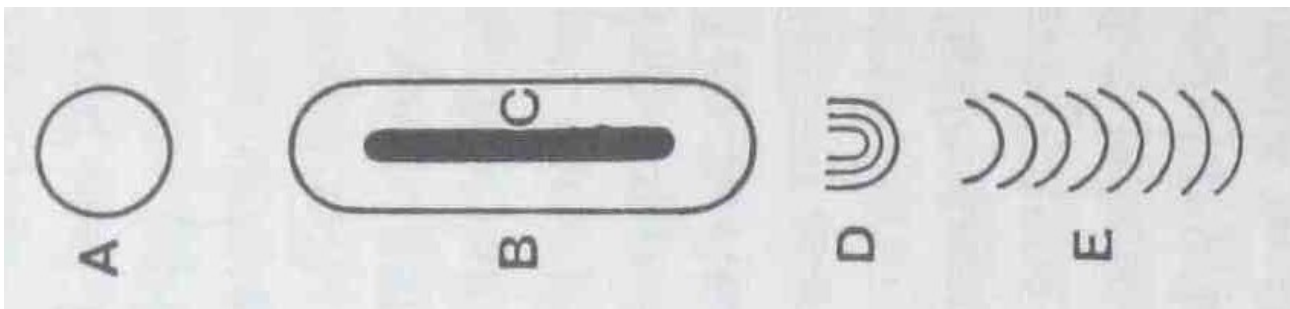


Fig. 137.

A – The <i>Indora</i> fire,	B – The <i>rulla</i> mound,
C – The <i>Aworra</i> ,	D – The <i>Arukala</i> men,
E – The other men,	

and placed a stick lengthwise on it ©. This is called *aworra*, which means emblem, and is supposed to represent the body or *mberka* of their victim. At one end they made a fire, to which the special name *indora* is given (A). The whole is called *rulla* (earth), *aworra* (emblem), *mberka* (body of a man), *indora* (fire). The men sat down in single file with outstretched legs fitting into one another.¹⁶

¹⁶ When representing this on the sand the native made marks corresponding exactly to those that are very often drawn on Churinga to represent men and women sitting down.

The Arunta

Two or three men sit in front, and are called *arukala* (D) which means those in front, or before.¹⁷ It is said of them, *arungura*, *kaldja*, *indidjinuga* – which means that they know everything and can teach – in other words, they have been present at an Atinga before and know what to do. They “sing” the *aworra* carried on by one of the *Arakula*. When they came close to the victim's camp they made another *rulla* mound and fire, sitting down as before and singing the words, *Kuruna* (spirit), *aknulla nulla* (take away), *irrawilia* (dead man), *urkna* (juices), *inkaka* (run cut) ; *irrarja* (dry), *kutta* (altogether), *irrupirra* (go into the ground),. This means, I see his spirit gone away : he is empty of spirit ; when he is dead may his juices run out into the ground and he be quite dry. Then they put the *aworra* in the fire and burnt it, the *Kuruna* being supposed to be burnt with it.

The preliminary ceremonies before starting out had taken place on the twelfth of May, and after of the party, there was not a little anxiety felt as to what had happened to them, for, when intent upon an object of this kind, the native does not loiter much by the way, and it is astonishing what an extent of country he will cover in a very short time. He is always anxious to steal upon the enemy without the latter having the chance of knowing that he is in any danger, and in the same way the return journey is made rapidly so to prevent the party from being overtaken by any friends of the dead man. Watchers were accordingly stationed on a hill which commanded a view of the country over which the Atinga party must travel, but it was not till the twenty-first of May that news came into camp that the party could be seen returning, some distance away. There was still considerable anxiety felt, as the men could not be seen distinctly, and it sometimes happens that the avengers, if the enemy gets wind of their coming, return minus one or two of their number. However, on nearer approach it was seen that each man was painted black with

¹⁷ The term *arukalinia* is applied to the senior man or woman in a “family” – thus *Arunga arukalinia* is the oldest brother of the paternal grandfather of any man.

The Arunta

charcoal, and had twigs of *Eremophila* hanging down over his forehead and inserted into the hole through the nasal septum – a sure sign that the Atninga had been successful.

Following up the bed of the creek, the party came on through a gap in the hills. They approached in the form of a square, every man holding his spear upright in one hand and the shield in the other, and at the same time prancing along with the usual exaggerated high knee action. An old woman, who, being in mourning, was bedaubed from head to foot with pipeclay, met them before they reached the camp, and, with a fighting club in her hand, went through a series of grotesque dancing movements in front of them. As she did so they stood still in perfect silence, but after a minute or two danced on and then came to a final halt in the bed of the creek. Once more the old woman pranced about expostulation with them and saying, *Yjina nunaka aranungara tula alpukka*, what do you all want to go and kill our friend for ? Then she said to them, *Ta*, I ; *aranungara*, all about ; *ulquita*, shield ; *teppa*, back ; *tuma*, strike ; *illatilkuma*, solid sound ; *mara*, good ; *etata*, life ; *kainba*, safe ; *illdaira*, sound ; *kurna*, bad ; *tailya*, no good ; *unda*, you ; *imma*, by and by ; *tutchinga*, kill ; *aranungara*, you all ; *atua*, men ; *tmara*, camp ; *airpunga*, country (Fig. 138). When this was over, without speaking a word, the *Immiringja* men – that is, those who had actually taken part in the killing – came forward and stood in the front line, each man with his spear resting on the ground and his shield held with his spear resting on the ground and his shield held with its convex side outwards. The old woman and a younger one struck each of them in turn a fighting club (Fig. 139). This ceremony (called *ulquita tuma* ; *ulquita*, shield ; *tuma*, to strike) is regarded as being of considerable importance. The spirit of the dead man is supposed to be following up the party in the form of a little bird called *chichurkna*, which is watching its opportunity to injure the men by evil magic. If, when the shield of any man be struck, it gives out a hollow sound (*atalaia*), the owner is under some evil influence and will not live long ; but if, on the other hand, the sound be firm and strong (*illatilkuma*), then all is well and the evil magic has not affected him. The men who had not actually taken part in the killing stood, meanwhile,

The Arunta

in the back rows, everyone listening carefully to the sound given out by the different shields. These men are called *alknalarinika*, or onlookers, and as soon as this *ulquita tuma* ceremony was over they left the group and related to the older men, who had now come up, what had taken place. They described how they had found him out in the bush, and had divided into two parties, a larger one of onlookers, or *Alknalarinika*, and a smaller one, *Immirinja*, to do the spearing. The latter stood between the former and their victim, who, when he realised what was happening, ran round towards the onlookers shouting, *Injairilla nukwa*, my mob, or friends ; *pitchai parpa*, come up quickly ; *erkinda inchikka*, come round, hide me ; *eritchilla yinga tumunga*, don't see me killed. The spearing men, however, shouted, *Wau ! Wau ! Indoriga parpa twai*, many spears, quickly kill him. The *Immirinja* men still remained silent, sitting down upon the ground. For a short time nothing more was said or done, and then, in twos and threes, the *Immirinja* men jumped up, and making a wide circuit in front of the group of men, ran round with exaggerated high knee action and finally came to a stand close to an old man who went out to meet them. Each of them held his shield with the convex side outwards and the old man struck it with a boomerang (Fig. 140). When this was done they walked back again to the group of seated men.

After an hour or two the men went away to their respective camps, but for days to come the *Immirinja* must not speak of the expedition. They have also to be very careful to paint their bodies black¹⁸ and to continue the wearing of the *Eremophila* twigs. At night-time they wear *alpita* – that is, the tail-tips of the rabbit-bandicoot – which, being part of a nocturnal animal, is supposed to make the wearer wakeful. The *chichurkna* keeps flying over the camp hoping to injure his murderers, who have to be very careful not to allow the bird to catch sight of their right arm, else it would become paralysed. The *chichurkna* sounds like a child crying in the distance, and when once it has been heard by any man it is powerless to do him further harm.

18 The idea of this is probability to render themselves invisible. The widow of a dead man has to paint her body white, so that the spirit of the dead man can see that she is properly mourning for him.

The Arunta

It transpired that upon this particular occasion the avenging party had not killed the man whom they actually went in search of. He had somehow got news of their coming, and had discreetly cleared away to a distant part of the country. As they could not kill him they had speared his father, under the plea that the old man had known all about his son "going Kurdaitcha" to kill the Alice Springs man, and had not attempted to prevent him from doing so. It will not be very long before a return *atninja* will be organised to visit the Alice Springs group, and then probably the old man's death will be avenged. In this way, year after year, an endless kind of vendetta is maintained amongst these tribes, though, fortunately, it sometimes happens that there is more noise than bloodshed.

There is a somewhat strange custom sometimes followed in connection with avenging the death of a man. If the special *Gammona* whose duty it is to organise the avenging party does not do so, the widow of the dead man goes to perhaps two or three other *Gammonas*, and says to them, *Atna raidulla ta inditchikka* – that is, she invites them to have marital relations with her : adding, *Unta letchikka atua tutchikka*, you walk and kill the man. They say, *Nurba arragutja atna nana letchikka atua tutchikka*, which means, this is the wrong woman for us to take, but we will go and kill him. They are supposed to be obliged to comply with her request, and must afterwards go out and kill the man.

CHAPTER XIX

The Customs of Kurdaitcha and Illapurinja

Amongst the Central Australian natives there is no such thing as belief in natural death ; however old or decrepit man or woman may be when this takes place, it is at once supposed that it has been brought about by the magic influence of some enemy, and in the normal condition of the tribe the death of one individual is followed by the murder of someone else who is supposed to be guilty of having caused the death. Not infrequently the dying man will whisper in the ear of a *Railtchawa*, or medicine man, the name of the man whose magic is killing him. If this be not done, then there is no difficulty in fixing sooner or later on the guilty party by some other method. Sometimes when digging the grave a hole will be found leading out of it on one side, which at once shows the direction in which the culprit lives ; or this may be indicated, perhaps as long as a year after the death, by a burrow made by some animal on one side of the grave. The identity of the guilty man is always by the medicine man.

When it is known who the culprit is, a Kurdaitcha party may be arranged to avenge the death. This custom is, so the natives say, much less frequently carried out at the present day than in former years, and in the southern parts of the tribe seems to have died out together.¹⁹ When it is decided who is guilty, a council of the old men of the group to which the dead man belonged is held and, if it be decided that vengeance is to be exacted by means of a Kurdaitcha party, then the man who is to play this part is chosen. The name

¹⁹ An excellent account of the Kurdaitcha custom as it formerly existed in the southern part of the Arunta tribe has been published by Mr. P. M. Byrne, *Proc. Roy. Soc., Victoria, vol. Iii* (new series), p. 65.

The Arunta

Kurdaitcha is applied to the latter, and he wears the shoes to which also the same name has been given by white men. In the north the native name for them is *Interlinia* and in the south *Intathurta*.

These shoes have the form of a thick pad of emu feathers matted together with human blood drawn from the arm of some young man. They are so ingeniously made, however, that the use of anything like blood in their construction would never be suspected ; indeed, it is difficult to detect, even with the shoes in one's hands, how the feathers are matted into such a compact mass without apparently the use of anything like stitching. On the upper surface is a network of human hair-string made from the hair of any living man or woman – it does not in the least signify who the individual is – and in the middle of the network is a hole through which the foot passes and across which stretches a cord made of several strands of hair-string twisted together. As we have said, it is by no means an easy matter to make the shoes, and as usual, in the manufacture of any special article, there are certain individuals who are famed for their skill in making them. No woman or child may see them, and they are kept wrapped up in skin or else placed for safety in the sacred storehouse along with the Churinga. It is said that they may be used more than once, but the nature of the shoe is such that it could not last more than one journey over the hard ground characteristic of the interior. As a matter of fact it is very doubtful if they are ever actually worn (Fig. 141).

Before a man may wear the shoes he has to submit to a most painful ordeal. A stone is heated to redness and then applied to the ball of the small toe of either foot – it does not matter which – until, as the natives say, the joint is softened, when, with a sudden jerk, the toe is pulled outwards and the joint is thus dislocated. There is no doubt that some such ordeal as this is passed through, as we have examined feet of men who claim to be what is called *Atua Kurdaitcha* at Charlotte Waters, Crown Point on the Finke River, Owen Springs and Alice Springs amongst the McDonnell Ranges, all of which show the remarkable peculiarity of the dislocation. In correspondence with this is the fact that the true Kurdaitcha shoe

The Arunta

has, at one side, a small opening made in the hair network through which the toe is thrust.²⁰

Each Kurdaitcha man when going on his errand is accompanied by a medicine man, and the two men are rubbed over with charcoal – black being in the Arunta tribe the colour associated with magic – and decorated with bands of white down. The hair of both men is tied up behind and a small conical helmet of twigs is fastened on with hair-string. The Kurdaitcha himself has lines of down passing across the front of the helmet, down the side of the face and front of the body and legs as far as the knees. The medicine man has a median line running from the top of the helmet to the tip of his nose ; another curved line meeting this at both ends encloses the eye of each side ; and on the body a broad band of charcoal runs across from shoulder to shoulder and downwards till, at the level of the sternum, it divides into two, one passing on either side of the mid line and so on as far down as the knee. The bands are outlined with white down, and, as the pattern is a constant one, the Kurdaitcha man can always be distinguished from the medicine man (Fig. 142).

Both of the men wear the *Interlinia* or shoes which, when thus in use, are decorated with lines of white and pink down, and while they are being put on and attached to the feet and legs with human hair-string, the Kurdaitcha sings

“Interlinia turlaa attipa
Interlinia attipa,”

Which literally translated means, “*Interlinia* to me hold fast *interlinia* hold fast.” There is not, either at the making or at the putting on of the shoes, anything in the way of an incantation beyond this simple one.

Like the man who is on any particular occasion acting as a Kurdaitcha, the doctor himself must be an *Atua Kurdaitcha* who has qualified by passing through the ordeal by fire in which the toe is dislocated. Both men carry shields and spears, and also one or more Churinga, which are supposed

²⁰ A considerable number of these shoes are made apparently more for models than for use, and such are usually much too small to be worn on a native foot, and do not have the small hole, though probably this is not made until the time of actual use. These shoes are made for carrying such things as *Namatwinnas* and small stone knives used at initiation ceremonies.

The Arunta

as usual, to impart strength, courage, accuracy of aim, and also to render them invisible to their enemies, and, in addition, they act as charms to prevent their wearers being wounded. Around his waist each one wears the *Kuru-urkna*, or girdle, made from the hair which has been cut from a native after his death and which is supposed to endow the wearer with all the war-like virtues of the dead man.

Followed by the medicine man, the Kurdaitcha takes the lead until the enemy is sighted. Then the medicine man falls into the rear, while the Kurdaitcha stealthily creeps forward towards his quarry and, suddenly rising up, spear him before he is aware of presence of an enemy. Both medicine man and Kurdaitcha have meanwhile put the sacred Churinga between their teeth, and when they are thus armed the spear cannot fail to strike the victim. As soon as this is done the Kurdaitcha man goes away to a spot little distance from the fallen man from which he cannot see the operations of the medicine man, who now approaches and performs his share in the work. By aid of his magic powers and by means of the *Atnongara* stones he heals the victim. These *Atnongara* stones are small crystalline structures which every medicine man is supposed to be able to produce at will from his own body, throughout which it is believed that they are distributed – in fact, it is the possession of these stones which gives to the medicine man his virtue. Into the spear wound he rubs a white greasy substance called *Ernia*, which he obtains by pressure of the skin glands on the outside of the nostril. After all external traces of the wound have disappeared he goes quietly away and, together with the Kurdaitcha man, returns to his country. Having been touched by the *Atnongara* stones, the victim returns to life, but is completely ignorant of all that has taken place. He returns to camp and in a short time sickens and dies. His death is attributed to Kurdaitcha or to some other form of magic influence, but no one will be able to trace the tracks of the Kurdaitcha.

Another form of Kurdaitcha which has not the sanction of the council of elders, but is said to be the more favourite method of procedure is for the Kurdaitcha to go alone without the medicine man accompanying him. After spearing his enemy

The Arunta

he allows the body to lie out in the sun for an hour or two, and then he makes an incision in the tongue through which he sucks away the blood which is supposed to have accumulated internally. Then he plugs up the spear wound with the *Alpita* (a rat-tail-tip ornament worn as a conventional pubic covering) and leaves it there a short time, while he sings a magic chant. Then the *Alpita* is removed and a small fire-stick is held close to the wound, so that the skin contracts and the wound closes up and heals. Sometimes instead of sucking the tongue the Kurdaitcha catches a special kind of slender, smooth-bodied lizard (*Rhodona bipes*) which frequents the roots of mulga trees and inserts the head of the animal into the wound, through which it is supposed to suck up all the blood. Finally he either bites the tongue of the victim, or else presses a charmed bone called an Injilla under it, the effect of either of which actions is to cause the victim to lose completely all recollection of what has taken place when, a short time afterwards, he comes to life again. The man who has thus been killed returns to his camp having no idea of what has happened, and soon sickens and dies.

Whilst there is much of a mythical nature about the Kurdaitcha, it is quite possible that there is a certain amount of truth underlying a good deal that is, of course, a matter of pure imagination. It is very possible that the shoes, if not actually used at the present day, have been used in past time for the purpose of aiding in secret killing, and, to the present day, the fear of the Kurdaitcha man lurking around is always present with the native. We have met several Kurd men who claim to have killed their victim, and many more men who are perfectly certain that they have seen Kurd. One group of men will tell you that they do not go Kurdaitcha, but that another group does do so, and if you then question the latter they will tell you that they do not, but that their accusers do. It is, in fact, a case of each believing the other guilty and both being innocent. At the same time many will at once confess that they do go Kurdaitcha, when as a matter of fact, they do not.

As to the question of tracking, the idea which has been generally held, that the shoes are used to prevent the tracks

The Arunta

being seen, will not be regarded as at all satisfactory by those who are acquainted with the remarkable power of the Australian native in this respect. They will neither hide the track nor, though they are shaped alike at each end, will they even suffice to prevent any native, who cares to look, from seeing at a glance which direction the wearer has come from or gone towards. Any even moderately experienced native will, without the slightest difficulty, tell from the faintest track – from an upturned stone, a down-bent piece of grass or a twig bent down, or broken off a shrub – not only that some one has passed by, but also the direction in which he has travelled. The only way in which they can be of use in hiding tracks is by preventing it from being recognised who was the particular individual, and in this way they might be of service, for when once an experienced native – almost incredible though it may sound to those who have not had the opportunity of watching them – has seen the track of a man or woman, he will distinguish it afterwards from that of any other individual of his acquaintance.

Most probably the explanation is, not that the native cannot follow the track, but that either he persuades himself that he cannot, or, what is still more likely, that the fear of the magic power of the dreaded *Kurdaitcha* causes him, if he catches sight of such a track, to avoid as much as possible the spot where he has seen it, in just the same way in which an ordinary European peasant will avoid the spot haunted by a ghost.

Our impression with regard to the *Kurdaitcha* is that at the present day it is merely a matter of myth, though at the same time every native is firmly convinced that some other native does actually “go *Kurdaitcha*,” and is quite prepared, as a general rule, to allow others to think that he himself does ; he will even go to the length of suffering the pain of having his toe dislocated in order to “prove” that he is a genuine *Atua Kurdaitcha*. To those who are personally acquainted with the Australian native there will not appear to be anything at all improbable in this. He delights in mystery, and for the purpose of standing high in the estimation of his fellow men will submit to inconveniences and discomforts which perhaps

The Arunta

appear to a white man to be ludicrously out of all proportion to the advantages to be gained, but to him it is far otherwise, and the mystery which surrounds and lends importance to the individual who has actually, for example, "gone Kurdaitcha," is just what appeals to the imagination of the Australian native. At the same time it is not by any means improbable that at some time past some such custom associated with secret killing was even largely practised, and formed a kind of endless vendetta. Possibly some old *Oknirrabata* whose superior wisdom had gained for him great repute (just as it would do at the present day), perceiving the endless deaths which it entailed, introduced the curious and painful ordeal of dislocation of the toe as a means of checking the practice.

During the Engwura which we witnessed as special ceremony was performed which had reference to the Kurdaitcha custom. This was called the *Ininja*, the word being the name applied to a small party of men sent out by the older men of any group to kill some special individual. The ceremony was in the possession of the Inkata of a group of Ullagubbera (little hawk) men, and had been received by him from a group of natives living out to the east. In connection with the performance five men were decorated with bands of charcoal edged with white down, a line of the latter running straight from the top of the helmet along the bridge of the nose and then over the upper lip and beard, which was tied back upon the face with hair-string. A semi-circle of white down, each end of which touched the median line, surrounded the eyes. Every man carried a shield, and was either armed with a spear-thrower or boomerang, while one of them carried a long spear, the pointed end of which was decorated with down.

One by one the men ran out with exaggerated high knee action from the group of natives who were assembled at one side of the Engwura ground. Crouching down in various spots, each man lay on the ground with his shield over his head and his body huddled up so as to occupy as little space as possible. They all lay perfectly still while an old man armed only with a fighting-club came and walked about, wandering here and there as if he were looking for some track. Then the Kurdaitcha men arose, and one after the other crept

The Arunta

stealthily up to him from behind. Suddenly he turned round and caught sight of the Kurdaitcha, who were just about to kill him with a boomerang or spear. Then a mock fight took place, in which the Kurdaitcha was always worsted and tumbled down, the old man each time giving him a final tap with his club, which particularly pleased the audience, for in these performances there are certain conventional actions which must be observed by the actors. One after another the Kurdaitcha men came up, and each was worsted in his turn. When apparently all had been killed, the old man still went wandering about, and the same performance was again gone through. After about fifteen minutes had been spent in this way the old man leisurely walked back to the group of spectators, once more killing each of the men before he got there. When close home a combined attack was made upon him, but with no success, as he killed them all, and the performance ended with him standing brandishing his club over their dead bodies, which were heaped together in front of him. The actions of the old man and of the Kurdaitcha men might have been copied from a stage fight.

Tradition relates that the incident to which the performance refers actually took place in the far past, when a noted warrior slew five Kurdaitchas who followed him as he went out tracking animals for food.

The Custom of Illapurinja.

Illapurinja, a word which means "the changed one", is the name given to a woman who may be spoken of as, in a modified form, a female Kurdaitcha, and whom we may regard, at all events at the present day, as being entirely a mythical personage whose existence in the mind of the native is concerned mainly with the observance of certain customs in connection with mourning for dead relatives. The natives idea with regard to her is as follows.

On very rare occasions a woman may, at her own request be sent out by her husband to avenge some injury done, or supposed to be done, to one of her own kindred. There is no such thing as any consultation of the old men in connection

The Arunta

with this ; in fact, if they knew of its being prepared they would prevent her going, so that the affair is a secret one, known only to the woman and her husband. It seems as if the Illapurinja has never been a very popular form of avenging an injury, and is very rarely mentioned except when a medicine man discovers that one of his patients, who has been seized with sudden and unaccountable illness, is suffering from the attack of an Illapurinja. A usual, the natives when questioned on the subject said that though they knew all about it, yet it was a custom which they did not practise or, rather, had not practised for many years, but that it was prevalent somewhere else. It is only a few years since a man was out hunting euros near to Alice Springs, and was attacked by an Illapurinja who had come from an outlying group. He was picked up insensible (the day was a very hot one, and in all probably the case was one of sunstroke), and brought into camp in a dazed condition. Under the treatment of an able medicine man, whose services were fortunately available, he recovered, after the extraction from his body a number of pieces of a wooden Churinga.

When being prepared, the Illapurinja is rubbed all over with grease and red ochre and decorated with white down, which is fixed on her body with blood drawn from her husband, this being the only occasion known to us on which a woman is thus decorated. Her head is ornamented with head rings and tufts of tail tips. In one hand she carries a long fighting-club, the ends of which are decorated with down, and in the other a large wooden stick, which has been specially made for the occasion by her husband and "sung" by him. It is spoken of as "Churinga" (Fig. 143).

When the decoration, which is done in perfect secrecy, is complete, no one but just the man and woman knowing anything whatever about it, the husband takes one of her digging-sticks, fixes it upright in the ground, and ties on to the upper end a small tuft of *Alpita* or rat tails. This he carefully watches while she is away. Should she be killed, then the *Alpita* at once falls to the ground of its own accord ; and the husband, understanding what this means, will immediately destroy his camp and everything in it which belonged to the

The Arunta

Illapurinja, and move to a new spot, leaving however, the digging-stick and *Alpita* untouched.

It is always night-time when the woman set out, and after having been decorated, she first of all lies down in the camp as if nothing unusual were about to happen ; but when her husband is asleep she steals quietly away, and goes to the place where she hopes to find the man or woman whom she is in search of. If it be a man, then she lies down concealed and waits her opportunity, which comes when his attention is occupied in stalking a kangaroo or emu. If a woman be her quarry, then she hides close to some favourite "yam" ground, and when the former is busy digging up the tubers she creeps up. In either case the Churinga is thrown from behind, so as to hit the victim's neck, when it enters the body, becoming, as it does so, broken up into a number of small pieces.

The victim at once becomes insensible, and remains so for some little time, and, when consciousness is once more recovered, suffers great pain. In the case of an old woman, death is sure to follow, but in that of a man or young woman, recovery is possible with the aid of a clever medicine man, who, after much trouble and by dint of a long-continued rubbing and sucking, may succeed in extracting the broken bits of Churinga from the patient's body.

If successful, the Illapurinja returns at once to her husband's camp, always waiting, however, till it be dark before she comes close up to it. During her absence he has made, and kept burning, a small fire at some little distance. By the side of this she lies down quietly until her husband discovers her presence, when he goes and takes her by the arm and leads her into his camp, where both of them sit down without speaking a word, while he removes all traces of the decorations and rubs her with fat and red ochre. The woman then takes up the stick to which the *Alpita* is tied, and sits down, while the man asks questions, to which she replies, but she must not volunteer any information.

The special breach of custom with the punishment of which the Illapurinja is associated, is the omission of a *Mia* to cut herself as a mark of sorrow on the death of an *Umba* – that is, a daughter, blood or tribal. Such an omission is a grave

The Arunta

offence against a dead *Umba*, and the dread of punishment at the hands of an Illapurinja must act as a strong inducement to secure the proper carrying out of the ceremony. If one *Mia* omits to cut herself, then some other one, will go in search of her, and, failing the chance of killing her, will strike one of the offending woman's brothers. There is now living at Alice Springs a man who was thus injured by an Illapurinja, and whose life was only just saved, so the natives believe, by the exertions of a medicine man. When his death does occur, it will undoubtedly be attributed to this attack, certain parts of the Churinga – so it will be said – not having been extracted.

This is the only case which has come to our knowledge in which a woman is decorated with down fixed on with blood, and in which, at the present day, she actually handles a Churinga. The latter, of course, is not one of the ancestral Churinga, but it is regarded as being a sacred stick, and is spoken of as a Churinga just as are certain other similarly shaped sticks which are used in various ceremonies, for which they may be specially made. All that the woman is told is that the stick has been 'sung' over, and is what is called *Arungquilta* – that is, charged with magic and evil influence.

The whole affair is a superstition kept alive to make some women believe that they, or their brothers, will suffer if certain ceremonies are not duly attended to, and it is worthy of notice that in this instance the victim belongs to the same group as the avenger.

CHAPTER XX

Methods of Obtaining Wives : Alkarinja Women : Marital Customs

The methods of obtaining wives may be classified under four heads. These are : (1) charming by means of magic ; (2) capture ; (3) elopement ; and (4) the custom of *tualcha mura*, by means of which a man secures a wife for his son by making an arrangement with some other man with regard to the latter's daughter.

Taking these in order, we may pass over the method of charming by means of magic, as this has been already dealt with under the head of magic in connection with the description of the use of the *Lonka-lonka*, *Chilara*, *Ulpmira*, and *Namatwinna* which is always used in the case of Alknarinja women. The use of these objects is a well-recognised method of obtaining wives, as is shown by the fact that a man's right to a woman, secured by means of one or other of them, is supported by the men of his own local group, provided always that the woman stands to the man in the relationship of *Anua* or lawful wife.

The second method, that of capture, is of much rarer occurrence, a fact which is to associated with the existence of the custom of *Tualcha mura*, according to which practically every man in the tribe is provided with at least one woman, to whom he is lawfully entitled. Indeed, the method of capture, which has been so frequently described as characteristic of Australian tribes, is the very rarest way in which a Central Australian secures a wife. It does not often happen that a man forcibly takes a woman from someone else within his own group, but it does sometimes happen, and specially when the man from whom the woman is taken has not shown his respect for his actual or tribal *Irundera* (father-in-law) by

The Arunta

cutting himself on the occasion of the death of one or other of the latter relations.

At times, however, a woman may be captured from another group, though this, again, is of rare occurrence, and is usually associated with an avenging party ; the women thus captured, who are almost sure to be the wives of men killed, are allotted to certain members of the avenging party. The following, which occurred not long ago in the case of a party sent out by the northern groups of the Arunta to take vengeance on the tribe living away to the north of them, on account of some real or supposed hurt done to the Arunta people, will serve to illustrate what takes place with regard to women captured on such an occasion. Shortly before arriving at their destination, the men who formed the party halted, and the old man who was acting as leader, sitting in front of the others, scraped two long shallow holes in the ground. To these the name of *Aworra* is given, and they represented, one the man whom it was intended to kill, and the other the woman ; had there been more than one woman, then there would have been one hole to represent each of them²¹. The meaning of the holes was explained by the leader, and pointing to the one which indicated the woman, he asked who wanted to have her. Two or three men said, "I do" ; and then the leader, after a short pause, during which he made up his mind what to do, taking a handful of earth out of the hole, presented it to the man to whom he decided to allot the woman, saying, "She belongs to you". When captured, as she was shortly afterwards, she became the property of that man, no one of the others disputing his right, nor, it may be remarked, was there any question of the other men having the right of access to the woman. In all such cases the woman is allotted to a man who is *Anua* to her, for, even when she belongs to a different tribe to the man, the equivalent groups in the two are well known, and regulate marriage just as if the man and woman belonged to the one tribe.

The third method, that of elopement, is to a certain extent intermediate between the method of charming on the one hand and that of capture on the other. It differs from the

21 On this occasion the party intended to kill a particular man.

The Arunta

first of these in that no magic element comes into play, though in reality, of course, there may be no difference whatever between the two so far as this is concerned. In the case of charming, however, the initiative may be taken by the woman, who can, of course, imagine that she has been charmed, and then find a willing aider and abettor in the man whose vanity is flattered by this response to his magic power, which he can soon persuade himself that he did really exercise ; besides which, an extra wife has its advantages in the way of procuring food and saving him trouble, while if his other women object, the matter is one which does not hurt him for it can easily be settle once and for all by a stand-up fight between the women and the rout of the loser. From capture it differs in the fact that the woman is a consenting party.

Not infrequently the elopement of a woman with some man is the cause of serious trouble between the members of different local groups. When an elopement takes place and the man succeeds in getting safety away, some time may elapse before the aggrieved husband takes any action, though at times the eloping couple are at once followed up, and then, if caught, the woman is, if not killed on the spot, at all events treated in such a way that any further attempt at elopement on her part is not likely to take place. If the man and woman succeed in getting away to a distant place, then the chances are that sooner or later the original husband of the woman will, accompanied by his friends, go in search of her and the man who has run off with his property. As a general rule the upshot of the matter is a fight between the two interested parties ; but at times the result may be that the friends get restive and interfere, in which case the fight becomes more serious and leads to a general quarrel between the two local groups, the men of the resident group, to which the man who has taken away the woman belongs, making common side against the men of the other group. There are certain men who are bound to help any given man in a quarrel of this nature, and these are those who stand to him in the relationship of *Kullia*, or elder brothers, *Witia*, or younger brothers, and *Unkulla* – that is, mother's brothers sons. If, for example, a man is a Panunga, then the men of his local group, but only

The Arunta

of the latter, who are Panunga and Ungalla, will assist him. The question of totem has nothing whatever to do with the matter ; the sons of his mother and father's brothers, blood and tribal, will stand by him to see that, at least, he gets fair play. The fighting may be of two kinds ; in the one case, if the aggrieved man wishes to regain the woman, the latter will go to the victor of a real fight, in which both freely use their weapons, but, if the latter will have to defend himself against the spears and knife of the first man without using his own weapons or attempting to retaliate. He will simply be allowed a shield with which to ward off spears. In either case the chances are that the woman will fare badly.

The following, which is an account of what actually took place during a recent case, will serve to illustrate the matter. A man belonging to a group about forty-five miles away to the west of Alice Springs persuaded a woman belonging to a man of the latter group to run away with him from her husband, and the latter, though he gave chase, could not capture the runaway wife. The elopers went away to the south and lived for a year in a distant group, returning finally to Alice Springs, accompanied by some of the man's friends. On arrival at the latter place the man went to the *Ungunja*, or men's camp, and the woman to the *Lukwurra* or women's camp. At the *Ungunja* a long discussion took place, during which the pros and cons of the case were discussed, the two men most interested remaining silent. After some time the man who had taken the woman got up, and taking with him some spears and a shield, walked out to a clear space some little distance away from the camp and shouted to the aggrieved man, who remained sitting, *Arragutja thala iknukunja yinga iltai*,²² which meant, I took your woman, come and growl. Thereupon the man got up, and standing some distance off, threw spears and boomerangs at the first man, who skilfully guarded himself with his shield, but made no attempt to retaliate. When all had been thrown he rushed in to close quarters with his enemy and began attempting to cut the thighs of the

²² *Iltai* is the word applied to the growling of dogs when they fight, and is used by the natives to express angry talk, and also fighting.

The Arunta

latter and his back also with a large stone knife, the attacked man doing his best to guard himself, but not again attempting to retaliate. After a time the onlookers thought that enough had been done, and calling out loudly, *Kulla impara*, which means enough, leave him, dragged the two apart. All the women meanwhile had assembled ; and the aggrieved man, walking over to where his erstwhile wife was standing, caught hold of her and cut her about the legs and body, avoiding, however, any vital part. Then, leaving her, he waved his knife in the air and started off for the camp, shouting, *Untantimma atnina, ipminja kutta, ipminja kutta*, You keep altogether, I throw away, I throw away. After having renounced her in this way she became the property of the man with whom she had eloped.

The fourth and most usual method of obtaining a wife is that which is connected with the well-established custom in accordance with which every woman in the tribe is made *Tualcha mura* to some man. The arrangement, which is often a mutual one, is made between two men, and it will be seen that, owing to a girl being made *Tualcha mura* to a boy of her own age, the men very frequently have wives much younger than themselves, as the husband and the mother of a wife obtained in this way are usually of approximately the same age.

When it has been agreed upon between two men that the relationship shall be established between their two children, one a boy and the other a girl, the two latter, who are generally of a tender age, are taken to the *Lukwurra* or women's camp, and here each mother takes the other's child and rubs it all over with a mixture of fat and red ochre in the presence of all the other women, who have assembled for the purpose of watching the ceremony. At the same time some of the girl's hair is cut off and given to the boy to signalise the fact that when grown up it will be her duty to provide him (he will be her son-in-law) with her own hair from which to make his waist-girdles. The arrangement is, of course, only made between boys and girls who stand in a definite relationship to one another. The girl must be on is *Mura* to the boy – that is, one whose daughters belong to the section from

The Arunta

which his wife must come – but whilst, in common with all the women of her particular section, she is already *Mura* to him, she now becomes *Tualcha mura* – that is, she his actual or prospective mother-in-law. This relationship indicates that the man has the right to take as wife the daughter of the woman ; she is, in fact, assigned to him, and this, as a general rule, many years before she is born. Not infrequently a woman's daughters will be allotted to brothers, the elder brother taking the elder daughter, the second brother the second daughter, and so on.

It is quite possible for a man to have more than woman standing to him in the relationship of *Tualcha mura*, in which case he will not infrequently hand on his right in the case of one woman to some younger blood or tribal brother. In doing so he does not necessarily hand over his right to the mother-in-law's hair, but will continue to receive this.

Sometimes a man without passing on his *Tualcha mura* right will waive this if the happens to have a wife already, or does not want, for any reason, to take the girl assigned to him. It frequently happens that the woman whose daughter is thus allotted to him may have a son and no daughter born, and in this case, without waiting on the chance of a girl being born, the man may agree to take the boy as what is called his *Unjipinna*. This establishes a relationship between the boy and the man, as a result of which the formers has, until he becomes *Atua_kurka* – that is circumcised – to give his hair to the man, who, on his part, has, in certain way, to look after the boy ; for example, he must grease his body occasionally and paint the sacred designs upon him at the ceremony of *Lartna*, or circumcision, the man has to tie the hair of the boy up with fur-string and place the hair-girdle round his waist.

Whilst accepting the *Unjipinna*, and so waiving his right to the girl, the man still retains his right to the hair of the *Tualcha mura* woman.

It very rarely happens, except in the case of special women called *Alknarinja*, that a man is not allowed to take the

The Arunta

daughter of his *Tualcha mura* woman, but occasionally, when a serious quarrel has arisen between the contracting parties, an attempt is made to give the girl to someone else, though the latter may feel quite sure that he will not be allowed to retain her without a struggle sooner or later.

The following is one of many instances within our personal knowledge of the establishment of the relationship. A Panunga man and a Purula woman living at Alice Springs had a daughter, who was, of course, an Appungerta girl. About the same time a Bultara man and a Kumara woman had a son born, who was, of course, an Uknaria. The two fathers consulted, and the result was that the little girl was made *Tualcha mura* to the infant boy. The latter is the prospective husband of the prospective daughter of the Appungerta girl, who will be an Ungalla – that is, a woman of the proper section from which the boy's wife must come.

Alknarinja Women

There is, in regard to the securing of wives, a curious tradition and custom connected with certain *Tidjanira* – that is, wooden Churinga – and the women with whom they are associated. According to the Achilpa tradition, after Numbakulla had split the original Churinga, called *Indulla-irakura*, so as to give rise to pairs, one stone and the other wooden, he made a hole (*aldura*) at one end of some of the latter. The ones that he treated in this way are called *Tidjanira arragutja Alknarinja* – that is, the Churinga of *Alknarinja* women. At a later time, but still in the Alchera, when one of the old Inkatas made a pair of *Tidjanira* from a mulga tree in which pairs of *Kuruna*, one *atua*, the other *arragutja*, had been left by Numbakulla, he could, if he chose to do so, bore a hole in one of the *Arragutja* Churinga, and thus transform it into a *Tidjanira Alknarinja*. The *Alknarinja* are women who “won't look at” or who “turn their eyes away” from men to whom they have been allotted. The custom associated with them is well known. They are not obliged to marry men to whom they have been allotted but can do so if they wish. They are women who must be “sung” before they will go to a man, and the

The Arunta

fact that this is so is clearly recognised. It is also well known who are *Alknarinja*. A man who desires to obtain one as his wife takes a small *namatwinna* (or *namatunna*) and swings it out in the bush. He must, however, belong to the section from which her husband lawfully come, otherwise there will be serious fighting. For example, only a Purula man can “sing” a Panunga woman, only a Bultara a Kumara woman? The *Alknarinja* are supposed to prefer men from distant places. The Choritja one, for example, will not “look at” a Choritja man, but can be “sung” successfully by a man at some distant place, such as Hermannsburg, or by a man of another tribe, such as the Ipirra, or the still more distant Kaitisha. She is perfectly free to go to the man who “sings” her if she wishes to do so. If an *Alknarinja*, as is usually the case, marries out of her own country, her *Kuruna* comes back to the *Pertalchera* belonging to her own Knanja. For example, is very definitely associated in tradition with an *Alknarinja* woman who arose and lived alone here in the Alchera. A special tree still marks the spot at which she used to stand looking out across the flats, and a block of stone indicates where she died and went into the ground.

Marital Customs

Whilst under ordinary circumstances in the Arunta and other tribes a man is only allowed to have marital relations with women of a particular section, there are customs which allow, at certain times, of a man having such relations with women to whom at other times he would not on any account be allowed to have access.

The following is the custom amongst the Arunta and Ipirra tribes. When a girl arrives at marriageable age, which is usually about fourteen or fifteen, the man to whom she has been allotted speaks to his *Unkulla* men, and they, together with men who are *Unkulla* and *Anua* to the girl, but not including her future husband, take her out into the bush and there perform the operation called *Atna-arilta-kuma*

The Arunta

(*atna*, vulva; *kuma*, cut).²³ The operation is conducted with a stone knife, and the operator, who is, except in the southern Arunta, a man who is *lpmunna* to the girl, carries with him one of the small wooden Churinga called *Namatwinna*, with which, before operating, he touches the lips of the vulva, so as to prevent too great a loss of blood. When the operation has been performed, the *lpmunna*, *Unkulla* and *Anua* have access to her in the order named. This ceremony is often performed during the progress of an Altherta or ordinary corroboree, when during the day-time, the men habitually assemble at the corroboree ground. When it is over, the woman's head is decorated, by the *lpmunna* man who operated, with head bands and tufts of *Alpita*,²⁴ the neck with necklaces, the arms with bands of fur string, and her body is painted all over with a mixture of fat and red ochre. Thus decorated, she is taken to the camp of her special *Anua* by the men who have taken part in the ceremony, and who have meanwhile painted themselves with charcoal.²⁵ On the day following, the husband will most likely – though there is no obligation for him to do so – send her to the same men, and after that she becomes his special wife, to whom no one else has right of access; though at times a man will lend his wife to a stranger as an act of courtesy, always provided that he belongs to the right section – that is, to the same as himself. After wearing the decorations for a few days, the woman returns them to her *lpmunna* man.

By reference to the tables already given, it will be clearly seen that on this occasion men of forbidden groups have access to the woman. Suppose, for example, that she is a Purula. Her proper *Anua* will be a Panunga man, and such an one is normally the only one with whom she has marital relations. The woman's *lpmunna* is an Ungalla man – that is, a man who belongs to her own moiety of the tribe; her *Unkulla* are Uknaria – that is, they belong to the half of her husband's section into which she may not marry. In addition

23 This ceremony is, strictly speaking, an initiation ceremony, equivalent in the case of women to that of sub-incision or *paira-arilta-kuma* amongst the men.

24 *Alpita* is the name given to the tail tips of the rabbit-bandicoot (*Peragale lagotis*); they are constantly used for personal decoration.

25 It is worth noting that charcoal is specially used for decorative purpose firstly in connection with magic, and secondly in connection with avenging parties.

The Arunta

to these forbidden men, there are the *Anua* or men who are her lawful husbands, so far as their section is concerned, but whose general right of access to her is lost when she is allotted to some special individual amongst them.

In the southern Arunta the operation is performed by a man who is *Nimmera* to the woman – that is, a man of the same section as the father of her future husband. For example, if she be a Panunga, the man will be a Kumara. The ceremony is performed when a considerable number of men are together in camp, and the details vary somewhat from those in the northern part. A brother of the woman, who has been told by the man that he, the latter, intends to claim his allotted *Anua*, takes the initiative and tells those who are participating in the ceremony to remain in camp. Individuals who stand in the relationship to her of *Mia*, *Oknia*, *Kullia*, *Ungaraitcha*, *Gammona*, *Ipmunna* and the particular *Anua* to whom she is allotted, sit down in camp, the woman being amongst them. Then a man who is *Nimmeara* to her comes up behind, and, touching the woman on the shoulder, tells her to follow him. He goes away, accompanied by perhaps two other *Nimmera*, one or two who are *Unkulla* to her, and one or two who are *Anua* – that is, are of the same section as her future husband. After the ceremony has been performed, she is decorated and brought back to the camp, and told to sit down immediately behind her special *Anua* to her, and afterwards she belongs exclusively to him.

In addition to the ceremonies which are concerned with marriage there is custom of somewhat the same nature, to which reference may be made here. In the eastern and north-eastern parts of the Arunta, and in the Kaitisha, Iliaura, and Warramunga tribes, considerable licence is allowed on certain occasions, when a large number of men and women are gathered together to perform certain corroborees. When an important one of these is held, it occupies perhaps ten days or a fortnight ; and during that time the men, and especially the elder ones, but by no means exclusively these, spend the day in camp preparing decorations

The Arunta

to be used during the evening. Every day two or three women are told off to attend at the corroboree ground, and, with the exception of men who stand in the relation to them of actual father, brother, or sons, they are, for the time being, common property to all the men present on the corroboree ground. In the Arunta tribe the following is exactly takes place : a man goes to another who is actually or tribally his son-in-law – that is, one who stands to him in the relationship of *Gammona* – and says to the latter : “You will take may *Anua* into the bush ²⁶ and bring in with you some *undattha altherta*” (down used for decorated during ordinary corroborees). The *Gammona* – that is, one to whom under ordinary circumstances he may not even speak or go near, much less have anything like marital relations with. After the two have been out in the bush they return to the camp, the man carrying *undattha* and the woman following with green twigs, which the men will wear during the evening dance, tied round their arms and ankles. There will be perhaps two or three of these women present on each day, and to them any man present on the ground, except those already mentioned, may have access. During the day they sit near to the men watching, but taking no part in the preparation of decorations. The natives say that their presence during the preparations and the sexual indulgence, which was a practice of the Alchera, prevents anything from going wrong with the performance ; it makes it impossible for the head decorations, for example, to become loos and disordered during the performance. At evening the women are painted with red ochre by the men, and then they return to the main camp to summon the women and children to the corroboree.

In connection with this subject, a curious custom concerned with messengers may be noticed here. It is not an uncommon practice, when summoning distant groups, to send one or more women along with the messengers. The men carry as evidence of their mission bunches of cockatoo feathers and nose-bones.

26 The bush is a term used in Australia to denote country more or less covered with a growth of natural trees and shrubs.

The Arunta

After the men have delivered their message and talked matters over with the strangers, they take the women out a short distance from the camp, where they leave them. If the members of the group which they are visiting decide to comply with their request, all men, irrespective of section, have access to the women ; but if it be decided not to comply with the request, then the latter are not visited. In much the same way, when a party of men intent on vengeance comes near to the strange camp of which they intend to kill some member, the use of women may be offered to them. If they be accepted, then the quarrel is at an end, as the acceptance of this favour is a sign of friendship. To accept the favour and then not to comply with the desire of the people offering it, would be a gross breach of tribal custom.

So far as the marital relations of the tribe are concerned, we find that whilst there is individual marriage, there are, in actual practice, occasions on which the relations are of a much wider nature. We have, indeed , in this respect three very distinct series of relationships. The first is the normal one, when the woman is the private property of one man, and no one without his consent can have access to her, though he may lend her privately to certain individuals who stand in the same relationship to her as her husband does. The second is the wider relation in regard to particular men at the time of marriage. The third is the still wider relation which obtains on certain occasions, such as the holding of important corroborees.

The first of these is purely a private matter, and it is only to this that the term of wives can be properly applied. The second and the third are what we may call matters of public nature – that is, the individuals concerned have no choice in the matter, and the women cannot be withheld by the men whose wives they are.

In the case of the women who attend the corroboree, it is supposed to be the duty of every man at different times to send his wife to the ground, and the most striking feature in regard to it is that the first man who has access to her is the very one to whom, under normal conditions, she is most strictly tabu – that is, her *Mura*.

CHAPTER XXI

Customs Concerned with Knocking out of Teeth; Nose-Boring;
Growth of Breasts; Blood, Blood-letting, Blood-Giving,
Blood-Drinking; Hair; Child-Birth; Food Restrictions;
Cannibalism.

Knocking out of Teeth

This is a rite to which individuals of both sexes must sooner or later submit, if they happen to belong to one or other of the various groups which inhabit what is called the *Kartwia Quatcha*, or rain country, which lies in the north-east of the area of the country occupied by the Arunta tribe. It is evident that the rite is one the significance of which, so far as this tribe is concerned, has undergone very considerable change in course of time. As a general rule it is performed before marriage, but not always, and when not done at an early age, the natives give as a reason that the boy or girl was too frightened, and excuse which would not gain a minute's delay if the ceremony were one concerned with initiation, and that such should be made shows that the ceremony is not one to which any very great importance is now attached.

The operation always takes place after the Water *Mbanbiuma* ceremony has been performed, and in the case of a fully-grown man it is performed on the *Mbanbiuma* ground. It is impossible to find out why the ceremony has become so especially associated with the rain or water totem, though at the same time it must be remembered that it is performed, not frequently, on men and women of other totems ; in fact, anyone, whatever his or her totem be, may undergo the rite at pleasure, but in the case of just the one totem it is obligatory, or practically so, though at the same time the non-observance of the custom would not prevent any man from being admitted to the secret of the tribe, but it would subject

The Arunta

him to what is most dreaded by the native, and that is the constant ridicule of the other men and women with whom he is in daily contact. The explanation, evidently devised by the natives to account for the special association of the custom with the rain totem, is that the object of the rite is to produce in the face a resemblance to what they call *Alailinga*, which is the name applied to certain clouds, dark with a light margin which are of peculiar appearance and are said to portend the coming of rain.

If the operation be performed on a man, he lies down on his back, resting his head on the lap of a sitting man who is his tribal *Kullia* (elder brother), or else a man who is *Unkulla* to him (mother's brother's son). The latter pinions his arms, and then another *Kullia* or *Unkulla* fills his mouth with fur-string, for the purpose, partly, they say, of absorbing the blood and partly of deadening the pain, and partly also to prevent the tooth from being swallowed. The same man then takes a piece of wood, usually the sharp hard end of a spear, and, pressing it firmly against the tooth, strikes it sharply with a stone. When the tooth is out, he holds it up an instant so that it can be seen by all, and while uttering a peculiar, rolling, guttural sound throws it away as far as possible in the direction of the *Tmara Mia Alchera*, which means the camp of the man's mother in the Alchera. The man who has been operated upon then gets up and picks up some boomerangs, which he throws at a shield which has been fixed upright so as not to hurt the shield. There is no singing or demonstration of any kind, other than that described, but the mother of the man must provide an offering of *mirna* – that is, seed food of some kind, or “yams” – and send it to the tribal *Kullia* or *Unkulla* who performed the operation, and he, in his turn, must provide an offering of food for the usual rule, according to which it is necessary, in all other cases with which we are acquainted, for the man who has been operated upon to provide the operator with food.

In the Kaitisha tribe the operation is simpler. The patient lies on the ground and the operator simply strikes with a stone

The Arunta

the sharpened end of a stick placed on the tooth. The tooth is then thrown towards the mother's Alchera camp (Fig. 143A).

In the case of a boys the operation is performed away from the *Mbanbiuma* ground, near to which they may not go, and at this ceremony women may be present, for with regard to the *Mbanbiuma* ground the same restriction applies to them as to boys. The performance is carried out in the same way as described, and the same rules apply with regard to the offering of food.

When a woman or girl is to be operated on, a little space is cleared near to the main camp, where men and women all assemble, except only those who are *Mura* to the girl. A tribal *Kullia* sits down, and the girl lies with her head in his lap, and the operation is conducted as in the case of the men and boys. The tooth when taken out is lifted up with the same guttural sound and thrown in the direction of the mother's Alchera camp. The girl now springs to her feet, and seizing a small *pitchi*, which has been placed close at hand for the purpose, fills it with sand, and dancing over the cleared space moves the *pitchi* as if she were winnowing seed. When it is emptied she resumes her seat amongst the women. Previous to the operation, the *Kullia* places in her hair a topknot of feathers of a cockatoo, which is returned to him later on. The girl, not her mother, must now provide an offering of seed food for the use of the operating *Kullia*, and he in his turn must send her an offering of meat.

The existence of this custom is of considerable interest. As is well known, it forms amongst many of the eastern and south-eastern tribes of Australia the most important initiation ceremony, after passing through which the young men are admitted to the status of manhood. Amongst the Arunta it has no such significance, and is not even of universal occurrence. At the same time, the ceremony which accompanies the operation may in all probability be regarded as indicative of a time when it was a more important rite than it is at the present day. Circumcision and sub-incision are the initiation rites of the Arunta and they are as characteristic in this respect of the Central tribes as the knocking out of teeth is of certain tribes of the east and south-east of the continent.

The Arunta

Ceremony of Nose-Boring.

In the Arunta and Ipirra tribes when a boy's nose has been bored – that is, as soon as the operation has been completed – he strips a piece of bark off a gum tree, if possible, and throws it as far as he can in the direction of the Alchera camp of his mother – that is, where the spirit individual of which his mother in the reincarnation lived in the Alchera. This little ceremony is called *ilyabara iwuma*, or the bark-throwing, and the boy is told to do it by men who stand to him in the relation of *Arunga*, *Oknia*, and *Kullia*, who also tell him that the reason for doing it is that it will lessen the pain and promote the healing of the wound. When the nose of a girl is bored, which is usually by her husband very soon after she has passed into his possession, she fills a small wooden vessel with sand, and facing in the direction of the Alchera camp of her mother, executes a series of short jumps, keeping her feet close together and her legs stiff, while she makes the *pitchi* move as if she were winnowing seed, until she gradually empties it, after which she simply resumes her ordinary occupation. Neglect to perform this ceremony would, so say the natives in explanation of it, be regarded as a grave offence against her mother.

Promoting the Growth of the Breasts.

To promote the growth of the breast of the girl, the men assemble at the *Ungunja*, or men's camp, where they all join in singing long chants, the words of which express an exhortation to the breast to grow, and others which have the effect of charming some fat and red ochre, which men who are *Gammona* – that is, brothers of her mother – have brought to the spot, as well as head and arm bands of fur-string. These men belong to the other moiety of the tribe to that to which the girl belongs; if she, for example, be a Panunga, then they will be Umbitchana. At daylight one of them goes out and calls her to a spot close to the *Ungunja*, to which she comes, accompanied by her mother. Here her body is rubbed all over with fat by the *Gammona* men, who then paint a series of straight

The Arunta

lines of red ochre down her back and also down the centre of her chest and stomach. A wide circle is painted round each nipple and straight lines below each of these circles. Long strings of opossum fur-string are passed across each shoulder and under each armpit; numbers of neck-rings are put round her neck, several head-rings are placed on her forehead, and a number of tail tips are fixed so that they droop down over the forehead and ears. All these things have been charmed by the *Gammona* singing over them.

When this has been done, the girl is taken out into the bush by her mother, who makes a camp there at some distance from the main one, and here the girl must stay until the *ilkinia* or lines on her body wear off, when, but not until when, she may return to the main camp. The girl wears the charmed necklets and head-rings until one by one they drop off and become worn out. As we have pointed out previously, this is to be regarded as a form of initiation ceremony concerned with women, and may be looked upon as the equivalent of the first ceremony of throwing up and painting the boy.

Various Customs Concerned with Blood, Blood-Letting, and Blood-Giving, etc.

In the Arunta and Ilpirra tribes, a girl at the first time of menstruation is taken by her mother to a spot close to, but apart from, the *Lukwurra* or women's camp, near to which no man ever goes. A fire is made and a camp formed by the mother, the girl being told to dig a hole about a foot or eighteen inches deep, over which she sits, attended by her own and some other tribal *Mia*, who provide her with food, one or other of them being always with her, and sleeping by her side at night-time. No children of either sex are allowed to go near to her or to speak to her. During the first two days she is supposed to sit over the hole without stirring away; after that she may be taken out by one or other of the old women hunting for food. When the flow ceases she is told to fill in the hole. She now becomes what is called *Wunga*, returns to the women's camp, and shortly afterwards undergoes the rite of *Atna-arilta*, and is handed over to the man to whom she has been

The Arunta

allotted. She remains *Wunga* until such times as her breasts assume the pendent form so characteristic of the native women who have borne one or more children, after which she is spoken of as *Arragutja*, the name for a fully-grown woman.

Blood may be given by young men to old men of any degree of relationship and at any time, with the view of strengthening the latter. When it is given to a man of the same moiety of the tribe as the donor, it is drawn from a vein in the middle of the arm, and when to a man of the other moiety, it must be taken from a vein at the inner side of the arm. Occasionally it is drawn from the back of the hand, and still more rarely by the painful process of deeply puncturing the finger tips under the nail.

When starting on an avenging expedition or *Atninga*, every man of the party drinks some blood, and also has some spurted over his body, so as to make him what is called *uchuilima* – that is, lithe and active. The elder men indicate from whom the blood is to be drawn, and the men so selected must not decline, though the amount drawn from a single individual is often very great ; indeed , we once saw so much blood taken from a young, strong man that he dropped down from sheer exhaustion.

In addition to the idea of strengthening the recipient, there is the further important belief that this partaking together of blood prevents the possibility of treachery. If, for example, an Alice Springs party wanted to go on an avenging expedition to the Burt country, and they had with them in camp a man of that locality, he would be forced to drink blood with them, and, having partaken of it, would be bound not to aid his friends by giving them warning of their danger. If he refused to drink the blood, then, as actually happened in one case known to us, his mouth would be forced open and blood poured into it, which would have just the same binding influence as if the drinking had been a voluntary one.

Blood-drinking is also associated with special meeting of reconciliation which sometimes takes place between two groups who have been on bad terms with one another without actually coming to a fight. In this instance the group which is supposed to have suffered the injury sends a messenger to the

The Arunta

old men of the offending group, who say, "Our people want you to come and have a friendly fight." This peculiar form of meeting is called *Umbirna ilirima*, which means "seeing and settling (things)" If the offending group be willing, which they are almost sure to be, then the meeting is held, and at the commencement each party drinks the blood of its own members, and a more or less sham fight takes place with boomerangs, no one being any the worse.

When a young man for the first time takes blood from another man, the latter becomes for a time tabu to him, until he chooses to release the young man from the *intherta*, or ban of silence, by singing over his mouth.

Apart from these special occasions, blood is not infrequently used to assuage thirst and hunger ; indeed, when under ordinary circumstances a blackfellow is badly in want of water, what he does is to open a vein in his arm and drink the blood.

Blood-letting is a prominent feature of certain sacred ceremonies, such as the *Mbanbiuma* rite, as practised by the kangaroo men at Undiara, the great centre of their totem, where the young men open veins in their arms and allow the blood to stream out on to, and over, the edge of the sacred ceremonial stone which represents the spot there a celebrated kangaroo of the Alchera went down into the earth, its spirit part remaining in the stone which arose to mark the place. In the same way at the *Mbanbiuma* of the Unjiamba or Hakea flower totem held at Ilyaba, blood from the arm is sprinkled over the stone which represents a mass of Unjiamba.

The sacred pole called the *Kauaua*, which is erected at the close of the Engwura ceremony, is painted all over with blood, and, in all sacred ceremony – in fact, in many of the ordinary corroborees – down derived from either birds or plants is attached to the human body by blood drawn either from the arm or the sub-incised urethra.

Women are never allowed to witness the drawing of blood for decorative purposes ; indeed, the feeling with regard to women seeing men's blood is such that when a quarrel takes place and blood is shed in the presence of women, it is usual for the man whose blood is first shed to perform a ceremony connected with his own or his father's or mother's totem. This

The Arunta

is in some manner supposed to be by way of reconciliation, and to prevent the continuance of ill-feeling. The special term given to these ceremonies is *Ulua uparilima*, which means "the blood fading away". After a fight which took place recently, one of these ceremonies was performed by an Appungerta man of the witchetty grub totem. He personated a Chankuna (small berry) woman, to which to which totem his mother belonged, and was decorated with an elaborate head-dress representing the woman's digging-sticks, to which were affixed pendent bunches of feathers representing Chankuna bushes with the berries on them, which the woman was eating.

There are also various customs relating to the blood of women which may be referred to here.

In the Kaitisha and other northern tribes, when the rite of *Atna-arilta-kuma* is performed on a young woman by an *Ungaraitcha* or elder sister, the blood is collected in a special *pitchi*, which is made for the purpose by an elder brother of the woman, and is taken to the camp, where the *Mia*, *Uwinna*, and other women both smear their bodies with it and drink some. It has been already stated, in the account of the initiation ceremonies, that the blood which flows at the operation of *Lartna* on a boy is taken to the women's camp and rubbed over the breasts and foreheads of women who are the elder sister of the boy and of his mother.

The deposits of red ochre which are found in various parts are associated with women's blood. Near to Stuart's Hole on the Finker River, there is a red ochre pit which has evidently been used for a long time ; and tradition says that in the Alchera two kangaroo women came from Ilpilla, and at this spot caused blood to flow from the vulva in large quantities, and so formed the deposit of red ochre. Travelling away westward they did the same thing in other places. In much the same way it is related Wankima, in the eastern part of the Arunta district, they were so exhausted with dancing that their organs fell out, and gave rise to the large deposits of red ochre found there.

Blood is occasionally given to both men and women to strengthen them when they are ill. When given to a man –

The Arunta

and it is only given in very serious cases – it is drawn from the labia minora, and one of the women, taking first of all one of the several kinds of witchetty grubs which are eaten, dips this in the blood and gives it to the man to eat, after which his body is rubbed over with the blood and afterwards with grease and red ochre. When a woman is very ill and weak, one of her male *Umba*, to whom she is *Mia alkulla* – that is, he is the son of one of her younger sister – may volunteer to strengthen her with his blood, in which case all the women and children are sent away from her. The man draws a quantity of blood from the sub-incised urethra, and she drinks part of it, while he rubs the remainder over her body, adding afterwards a coating of red ochre and grease. If the woman recovers, she must not speak to the man, or to the men who accompany him, until such time as she has sent to him an offering of food. In all cases when a man or woman feels ill, the first thing that is done is to rub red ochre over the body, which may possibly be regarded in the light of a substitute for blood, just as sometimes a ceremonial object may be rubbed over with red ochre instead of blood.

We may mention here also certain custom which are concerned with the curing or strengthening of weak men and women.

In some cases of serious illness women will charm, by “singing” it, a mixture of fat and red ochre, which they rub into the body of the sick man, all classes taking part in the operation. If the man recovers he must not speak to any of the women who took part in the ceremony except his own *Anua*, until after such time as he has made them an offering of meat. When this is done, the women assemble at some little distance from the *Lukwurra*, or women's camp, while the man, accompanied by his own and tribal *Kullia* (elder brothers) and *Oknia* (fathers), carries the meat, which is most likely kangaroo or euro flesh, and silently places it in front of the women, who then rub him over with red ochre, thus removing the ban of silence. The men and women then return to their respective camps, and the meat is cooked and eaten at the women's camp.

In the northern and western Arunta and in the Ilpirra tribe,

The Arunta

for the purpose of strengthening a delicate woman, a part of the internal reproductive organs (called *ertoacha*) is taken from a male opossum, wallaby, euro, or kangaroo. The woman lies down on her back, and her husband, placing the *ertoacha* upon the *mons veneris*, "sing" over it for some time, after which the woman swallows it whole.

In some cases the same part of the animal is taken by the man and half cooked, after which he coats it with grease, charms it by singing over it, and then presents it to his wife ; she has to swallow it whole without having any idea of the nature of the object, which, in this case, is given for the purpose of promoting sexual desire. For the same purpose fluid material from the *ertoacha* may be squeezed into the vulva.

Customs Concerned with Hair.

A man's hair always goes to someone who is either *Irundera* or *Umbirna* to him. Supposing a man has three sons, then each of them is made son-in-law to some special man whom he calls *Irundera-tualcha*. The latter has the first claim to the younger man's hair. Any which there may be to spare goes to the son of an *Irundera* – that is, to a man who is *Umbirna* of the donor. In this way a man receives hair from (1) his actual mother-in-law (his principal supply), (2) from a *Gammona* or son-in-law, (3) from an *Umbirna* or brother-in-law, while (4) under certain circumstances, already described, he receives a special supply from a particular *Umbirna* to whom he stands in the relationship of *Unjipinna*. In addition to these, which may be called his normal sources of supply, he will sometimes receive hair-string as a return for some favour rendered. For example, a man who belongs to a different totem from his father inherits the Churinga of the latter, but they still remain in the storehouse of the father's local totemic group. Suitable present of such a valuable article as hair-string will often persuade the head man of the father's group to allow the son to remove, for a time, the Churinga of the former to the storehouse in which his, *i.e.* the son's, Churinga is kept.

A man when cutting or having his hair cut, which he must

The Arunta

do periodically, as it is his duty to present it to certain individuals, always sits down facing the direction of the Alchera camp of his mother. If he fails to do this some great calamity will befall him.

At the close of the initiation ceremony of *Arilta*, in the case of the Northern Arunta, the elder sisters of the boy cut off a few locks of his hair, which they keep for themselves.

The distribution of a dead man's hair has been already alluded to, as well as the fact that in these tribes the remarkable customs according to which a man's hair must be given to certain individuals have of necessity prevented the existence of the feeling, so strongly developed amongst many other Australian tribes, that on no account must a stranger be allowed to secure even the smallest fragments of hair of any other man or woman, lest he should be able to injure them by evil magic.

Custom at Child-Birth.

When a child is about to be born the woman goes to the *Lukwurra*, or women's camp, or if, as sometimes happens the birth takes place while the natives are on the march, the mother stays behind with one or two old women. If there be, which there rarely is, any difficulty in child-birth, the man, without saying anything, strips off all his personal adornments and empties his bag or wallet of knick-knacks on the ground. Then a man who is *Mura* to him, without in any way referring to the matter, takes the hair-girdle, and proceeding to the *Lukwurra*, near to which as a general rule no man may go, ties it tightly round the woman's body just under the breasts, and then returns to the husband's camp. Not a word is spoken, but if after a time the birth of the child is not announced, the husband, still quite unadorned, walks once or twice slowly, at a distance of about fifty yards, up and down past the *Lukwurra* with a view to inducing the unborn child to follow him, which it is said it rarely fails to do.

After birth the umbilical cord is cut with a stone knife, or sometimes with the pointed end of a digging-stick at a distance of some inches from the body of the child. It is never bitten off.

The Arunta

There is no ligature, but the cut end is frequently dressed with hot ashes. The after-birth is burnt. After a few days the attached part of the cord is cut off by the mother, who by swathing it in fur-string (*indoiga*) provided by the mother's or father's mother, makes it into a necklace called *Akurlaitcha*, which is kept by the father's mother for a few days and is then placed round the child neck. The necklace is supposed to facilitate the growth of the child, to keep it quiet and contented, to avert illness generally, and it also has the faculty of deadening to the child the noise of the barking of the camp dogs.

The painting of a black line (called *lknula*) over the eyebrow in imitation of the mark on the *Ratappa* stone has already been alluded to.

Before the child begins to crawl it is carried about in a *pitchi*, in which a kind of bed is made for it out of shredded bark called *Ratappa unkumba*. When first it tries to walk it is given a stick called *Papa*. This is only an ordinary stick, but is often "sung" by the *Arunga* or *Chimmia* (paternal or maternal grandfather). The natives say, *Papa, ulla lidija knamulla*, stick, he holds it, stand up. There is nothing whatever of a sacred nature about it. Very soon after the birth the *Arunga* (father's father) goes out into the bush with two or three other old men and makes a wooden Churinga, which is known as *Curinga Twanyirrika*²⁷. This is placed in the *Pertalchera*, but has no *Kuruna* associated with it. These *Twanyirrikas* are used as whirlers, and one of them is given to a boy to carry about after initiation.

Food Restrictions.

In the neighbouring Urabunna tribe, as in the great majority of Australian tribes with regard to which we have information relating to their totemic systems, each individual is strictly forbidden to eat the animal or plant, the name of which he bears as that of this totem. That is, for example, an emu man or woman must not in any way injure an emu, nor must he partake of its flesh even when he has not killed it himself.

²⁷ cf. Chapter VI (Vol. 1).

The Arunta

The exact restrictions vary, however, to a certain extent in different tribes ; in some apparently, such as the Urabunna it applies at all times, in others, as described by Sir George Grey in the case of certain West Australian natives, the rule is observed at some, but not at all times. Thus he say ²⁸, “A certain mysterious connection exists between a family and its *kobong*, so that member of the family will never kill an animal of the species to which his *kobong* belongs ; should he find it asleep, indeed, he kills it reluctantly, and never without affording it a chance of escape. This arises from the family belief that some one individual of the species is their nearest friend, to kill whom would be a great crime, and carefully to be avoided. Similarly, a native who has a vegetable for his *kobong* may not gather it under certain circumstances, and at particular times of the year.”

In the Arunta restrictions as to not eating the animal or plant because it bears the name of the individual's totem may be said to agree generally, in actual practice, with those just described, with, however, this difference, that the Arunta native does not imagine that the animal or plant, or some particular one of the species, is his nearest friend. A man will eat only very sparingly of his totem, though there are certain special occasions on which, as a sacred ceremony, he partakes of his totemic animal or plant.

To this reference has been made elsewhere²⁹; meanwhile it may be said here that, in broad outline, the Central Australian agree with the majority of Australian tribes in the general restriction according to which the totem is tabooed as an article of food to the totemite. That this has not however, always been the case in perhaps indicated by certain traditions in which we see very distinct references to the eating of the totem by the members – in fact, the latter are represented as having a kind of prior claim to it for this purpose.

The only case in which there is any general restriction applying to the eating of an animal is in regard to the Achilpa, or “wild cat”, that in this instance there is something of a very special nature, as the restriction not only applies to

28 “Expeditions in North West and Western Australia,” 1841, Vol. II, p. 228.

29 Cf. Chapter VIII (Vol. 1).

The Arunta

members of the Achilpa totem, but also extends to every member of the tribe except the oldest men and women, and even they may only eat it after the lapse of three or four days, when it must be decidedly "high."

Apart from restrictions concerned with the totems, there are others which relate, on the one hand, to food which has been killed by special individuals, and, on the other, to food which may not be eaten by particular individuals at certain times of their lives.

Under the first series of restrictions we find that a man may not eat the flesh of any animal which has been caught and killed, or even handled, by his *Irundera* (father-in-law), *Umba* (children of his sisters), female *Mura* and *Ipmunna*, nor by the man who is the father of his mother-in-law. On the contrary, he must share his food with his *Irundera* or actual and tribal father-in-law, and it is his duty on killing game to ascertain if any of them are in want of food. As a matter of practice a man will never go out hunting with either his *Irundera* or *Umba* men, as they will appropriate everything which he kills while he is with them, so that he takes care to keep out of their way as much as possible. In the distribution of food he gives a portion first to his *Irundera*, then, after feeding himself and his own *Anua* and children, he gives any which he does not require to his *Umba*, and after that to his *Mura* and *Ipmunna* women. It may be added that this giving away of food according to well-established rules is not a custom more honoured in the breach than the observance, but is actually carried out. The Australian native cannot be accused of a lack of generosity ; what he has he distributes freely to those to whom tribal custom tells him that he ought to, and, it may be added, that he obeys to the letter the injunction of taking no heed for the morrow.

Not only must a man supply the individuals named with food, but he must also take care that, when he is eating, none of them is sufficiently near to distinguish what he is eating, lest they should spoil it by what is called *Equilla timma*, which means "projecting their smell into it." Should a man eat meat which has been killed or seen by any of these persons the food would disagree with him, and he would sicken and

The Arunta

suffer severely, a belief which has the result of securing the observance of the custom.

If we take the case of a particular man, say a Purula, it can be seen what are the sections to which the individuals concerned with this restriction belong. The *Irundera* and *Umba* are Appungerta, the *Mura* are Umbitchana and the *Ipmunna* are Ungalla. The association in this respect is clearly that between a man and what we may call his wife's group of relatives, and it is somewhat instructive to note that in the Arunta and other Central Australian tribes, in which descent is counted in the male line, a man continues, as it were, to pay a kind of tribute to his wife's group during his lifetime, which may perhaps be regarded as an early form of what obtains in so many other tribes under the different custom of paying, as it were, a lump sum down at the time of marriage.

This is, further, the one important feature, so far as the Arunta and tribes allied to it are concerned, which appears to indicate in any way a former condition in which a man owed allegiance to the group of his wife ; in no Australian tribe, so far as we know, is it the custom for a man to take up his abode with the family of his wife and to work for them, but in this custom we see, clearly expressed, the idea that a man owes something to the group from which his wife comes.

The second class of restrictions is of an entirely different nature, and is associated with the idea, first, of receiving the best things for the older people, secondly, of reserving certain things for the men as opposed to the women, while, thirdly, there are restrictions which deal with the food of individuals at particular times.

We may take the third series first. When a youth is circumcised, and until he has undergone and recovered entirely from the rite of *arilta* or sub-incision, he is forbidden to eat of the flesh of a number of animals ; if he were to transgress this rule, then his recovery would be retarded and his wounds would become much inflamed. The forbidden animals are : snakes, opossums, echidna, all kinds of lizard, mound birds or their eggs, bandicoots, wild turkey and their eggs, eagle-hawks and their eggs. The idea underlying this is evidently

The Arunta

that of discipling the novice, in just the same way as, during the Engwura, the younger men are not allowed to eat much food of any kind, but have to bring in the greater part of any game which they may secure and present it to the older men who remain in camp.

There are certain restrictions as to food connected with the early stages of pregnancy. A woman may, if she like to do so, eat meat, but the unborn child is supposed to resent this by causing sickness, and therefore the woman at first only eats vegetable food. Further still, during the first three or four months the husband does not kill any large game necessitating the use of spear or boomerang, but only catches rats, opossums, and other small game. It is supposed that the spirit of the unborn child follows him about and gives warning of his approach to large game. Should the man attempt to throw a spear or boomerang at any animal, then the spirit child will cause the weapon to take a crooked course, and the man will know that he has lost his skill in the chase and that the child is angry with him. If, however, despite this warning, the father persists in trying to kill large game, then the sickness and sufferings of the mother would be very largely increased. There is, however, nothing to prevent the man from eating game with has been killed by other men. The natives can offer no explanation of this custom, and it may be pointed out that the restriction with regard to killing game does not appear to have the slightest reference to anything which has to do with the totems.

The list of foods which an *Ulpmerka* – that is, a boy who has not been circumcised – may not eat is of considerable length. We append it, with the list of penalties following on transgression of the rules. The idea throughout is evidently that which obtains so largely in savage tribes, of reserving the best things for the use of the elders, and, more especially, of the elder men. The forbidden foods are as follows :

Wild turkey and its eggs (*Ertua*) ; penalty, premature age.

Female bandicoot (*Quirra*) ; penalty, probably bleed to death at circumcision.

Emu fat (*Erlia Inga*) ; penalty, abnormal development of the penis.

The Arunta

All kinds of parrots and cockatoos ; penalty, development of a hollow on the top of the head and of a hole in the chin.

Large quail (*Tulkara*) and its eggs ; penalty, non-growth of beard and whiskers and general stoppage of growth.

Eagle-hawk (*Irritcha*), except the legs; penalty, premature age and leanness ; the legs is supposed to impart strength and generally to improve the growth of the limb. Boys are often struck on the calf of the leg with the leg-bone of an eagle-hawk, as thereby strength passes from the bone into the boy's leg.

Wild-cat (*Achilpa*) ; penalty, painful and foul-smelling eruption on head and neck. This restriction applies until very old age is reached.

Podargus (*Aurainga*) and its eggs ; penalty, an ugly enlargement of the mouth.

The following restrictions and penalties concern girls and young women until after they have had a child, or until their breast begin to be pendant, in the characteristic way of the native women. They may not eat :

Female bandicoot (*Quirra*) ; penalty, continual flow of the menses.

Large lizards ; penalty, become *Arro-iwamai* – that is, one with an abnormal craving for sexual intercourse ; such a woman would be always tempting men, irrespective of tribal laws with regard to section, and would thus, sooner or later, meet with severe punishment, probably with death.

Large quail and its eggs ; penalty, non development of the breast.

Wild-cat (*Achilpa*) ; penalty, the same as in the case of the men.

Kangaroo tail (*Arura paira*) ; penalty, premature age, baldness, non-development of the breasts.

Emu fat ; penalty, malformation of the vulva.

Cockatoos and parrots of all kinds ; penalty, development of a hollow on the top of the head, and of a hole in the chin.

Echidna (*Inarlinga*) ; penalty, general malformation of the genital organs.

Brown hawk (*Hieracidea orientalis*, native name *Irkalanja*) ; penalty, absence of milk from the breasts, which will also

The Arunta

swell until they burst. Young women are only allowed to eat the young nestlings. The customs connected with this particular bird are curious. Not only is it *ekeirinja* or forbidden to the young women, but, if one of them be suckling a child and she sees one of these birds, she at once makes haste to turn so that her breast cannot be seen by the bird, because, if the bird should catch sight of it, or worse still, if its shadows were to fall on it, then the milk would fail and the breast would swell and burst. The women also believe that if they eat the old birds their sons will be afflicted with varicose veins (*ulurkna*) on the forehead, causing much disfigurement.

While the *Arrakurta* is out in the bush the actual *Mia* – that is, his mother – may not eat opossum, large carpet snake, large lizard, and fat of any sort, or else she would retard her son's recovery.

A curious restriction applying to women during the time of pregnancy, and also during the menstrual period, is that they may not, during the continuance of either of these, gather *Irriakura*, the bulb which forms, together with *Munyeru* (*Portulaca* cp.), a staple vegetable food ; the breaking of this rule would result in the failure of the supply of *Irriakura*. With this exception, there are no restrictions with regard to vegetable food, except in the case of individual whose totem is one of them.

Cannibalism.

There is very clear evidence, if tradition may be regarded as such, that during a former stage cannibalism was a well recognised custom. We have already described certain ceremonies performed at the Engwura which can only be regarded as pointing back to the existence of a different state of affairs from that which now obtains. For example, in the *Quabarra Ingwurninga inkinja*³⁰, two men had their bodies decorated with circles of white down which were supposed to represent the skulls of slain and eaten men. The performers themselves represented the *Ulthana* or spirits of the dead men wandering about in search of those who had killed and eaten them. In another ceremony two Achilpa men were engaged in cooking

30 *Ingwurninga* means bones; *inkinja*, arisen.

The Arunta

body of a third ; in another, concerned with the white bat totem, one of the performers carried on his head an object representing a limp, dead body ; and in the traditions dealing with the wanderings of the wild dogs, the men are continually referred to as killing and eating other wild dog men and women.

These ceremonies may be regarded as probably indicative of what took place in past times amongst the ancestors of the present Arunta tribe, and of what still takes place amongst the Luritcha tribe, by whom enemies are said to be eaten. Care is always taken at the present day, amongst the latter, to destroy the bones, as the natives believe that unless this is done the victims will arise from their coming together and will follow and harm those who have killed and eaten them. It is regarded as especially essential to destroy the skull – an existing belief which may be compared with the tradition referring to the early lizard man, whose head was not destroyed, and who therefore came to life again when his brother spoke to the head.

In the Luritcha tribe also young children are sometimes killed and eaten, and it is not an infrequent custom, when child is in weak health, to kill a younger and healthy one and then to feed the weakling on his flesh, the idea being that this will give to the weak child the strength of the stronger one.

As usual in regard to custom such as this, it is no means easy to find out exactly what takes place, as the natives of one part of the country will assure you that they do not indulge in the habit, but that they know that those of other parts do. When the accused are questioned, they in turn lay the same charge against their accusers, and so on, often from group to group.

The Arunta

CHAPTER XXII

Myths Relating to Sun, Moon, Eclipses, etc.

Throughout the Arunta tribe the sun, which is called *Alinga* or *Ochirka*, is regarded as female and the moon as male. At Alice Springs there is a tradition that in the Alchera the sun came out of the earth at a spot now marked by a large stone in the country of the Quirra or bandicoot people at Ilparlinja, about thirty miles north of Alice Springs. It was in form of a spirit woman, accompanied by two other Panunga woman, who were sisters and were called *Ochirka*, just as the sun itself is. The descendants of these two women are both now alive, though one of them, when undergoing reincarnation, having chosen an Appungerta mother, is now an Ungalla. We have before drawn attention to the fact that the spirit individual is regarded as free to enter any woman, though as a general, but by no means invariable, rule, as shown in the present instance, a woman of the right division is selected.

The elder of the two women is represented as carrying with her an *Ambaquerka*, or young child. Leaving the women at Ilparlinja, the sun ascended into the sky, and has continued to do so every day, though at night-time it pays a visit to the old spot, whence it rises in the morning. In that spot it may actually be seen at night-time by very gifted persons such as clever medicine men, and the fact that it cannot be seen by ordinary persons only means that they are not gifted with sufficient power, and not that it is not there. The women remained in the country of the bandicoot people, by whom, however, they were not seen, being very careful to hide themselves, and these two women gave rise to a local centre of the sun totem to which they belonged.

The sun is regarded as having a definite relationship to each individual member of the various divisions. Thus to a

The Arunta

Bultara it is *Uwinna*, to a Panunga it is *Ungaraitcha*, to a Kumara *Mia*, and to a Purula man *Unawa*-- terms which simply that it is regarded as belonging to the Panunga division, as did the spirit individual whom it represents.

The following ceremony, called the *Quabara Alinga* of Ilparlinja, is associated with the two women and the child left at Ilparlinja by the sun when she came out of the earth at that spot in the Alchera. The performers were two old men who were brothers, one being a Panunga of the lizard totem and the other a Panunga of the bandicoot totem. Their father was a bandicoot³¹ man, and their sister is living representative of one of the two women with whom the ceremony is concerned. The two performers, while decorating, were assisted by an old Panunga man and several Purula and Kumara men of the same locality, and during the decorating they sang of the *ambaquerka*. The performers at facing each other ; the lizard man, representing the elder woman, held between his thighs an oblong bundle made of grass and hair-string and decorated with alternate red and white circles of down. This represented the child. From his head hung long strings, made of many strands of fur-string and covered with rings of down with a bunch of tail-tips at the end. These strings were supposed to represent the kidneys and fat of the bandicoot upon which the women fed. The bandicoot man represented the younger sister, and carried on his head a weighty, disc-shaped bundle made of twigs, which were covered with many yards of hair and fur-string and decorated with a design of alternate red and white circles of down. This was supposed to represent the sun itself (Fig. 145). The performance consisted of the usual quivering and swaying about of the bodies of the two men, while the others present ran round. When it was over the head-dress was removed and pressed against the stomach of all the Panunga and Bultara men, but not against any of the other moiety, though several were present. It was then handed back to the old man who had worn it during the ceremony, and the latter called up a young Ungalla man of the locality, who had not been present at the decorating, and, while telling him about the woman, kept the dead-dress pressed up against the young man's stomach.

31 **Peramelidae** is the family of [marsupials](#) that contains all of the extant [bandicoots](#). One known extinct species of bandicoot, the [Pig-footed bandicoot](#), was so different than the other species that it was recently moved into its own family. There are four described fossil Peramelids. They are found throughout [Australia](#) and [New Guinea](#), with at least some species living in every available habitat, from rain forest to desert.

– Les **péramélidés** (*Peramelidae*), plus communément appelés **bandicoots**, sont des [marsupiaux](#) de quelques centaines de grammes à deux kilogrammes. Ils sont digitigrades avec des membres postérieurs adaptés à la course et au saut. Le quatrième doigt est développé alors que les autres sont généralement réduits.

The Arunta

The Moon.

The following two myths refer to the moon, which, as above stated, is regarded as of the male sex, and is spoken of as *Atua Oknurcha*, or a big man, its name being *Atninja*.

The first of these describes how, before there was any moon in the heavens, a man of the Anthinna or opossum totem died and was buried, and shortly afterwards arose from his grave in the form of a boy. His people saw him rising, and were very afraid, and ran away. He followed them, shouting, "Do not be frightened, do not run away, or you will die altogether. When no longer visible it is supposed that the moon man is living with his two wives, who dwell far away in the west.

The second myth describes how in the Alchera a blackfellow of the opossum totem carried the moon about with him in a shield as he went out hunting for opossums to eat. All another blackfellow of the Unchirka, a seed totem, came up by chance to where he saw a light shining on the ground. This proved to be the moon lying in the man's shield, which he had placed on the ground while he climbed up a tree in search of an opossum which he had seen in the branches. The Unchirka man at once picked up the shield and the moon in it and ran away with them as hard as he could. The opossum man came down from the tree and ran after the thief, but he had got such a start that he could not catch him. When he found that pursuit was hopeless and that he could not get the moon back again, he was very angry, and shouted out loudly that the thief should not keep the moon, but that the latter was to go up into the sky and give light to everyone at night-time. Then the moon went up out of the shield into the sky, and there it has remained ever since.

The following distinctive names are applied to the different phase of the moon :

The new moon is *Aninja kurka utnamma*.

The Arunta

Half moon is *Atninja kurka iwuminta*.
Tree-quarter moon is *Atninja urteratera*.
Full moon is *Atninja aluquirta*.

The Evening Star.

The name of the evening star is Ungamilia. Amongst the natives of the Alice Springs district the evening star is supposed to have been a Kumara woman in the alchera who had a *Nurtunja* and lived alone. She is associated with a large white stone which arose at a place near to what is now called Temple Bar – a gap in the McDonnell Ranges – to mark the spot where she went into the earth and left behind, along with her Churinga, her spirit part. Every night the evening star is supposed to go down into the stone, which lies away to the west of Alice Springs. It is situated in the middle of a strip of country which belongs to the big lizard totem. If a woman believes that she conceives a child when at this stone then the child belongs to the Ungamilia or evening star totem, but if it be conceived anywhere in the adjoining country, even close at hand but not actually at the stone, then it is an Echunpa or big lizard. Ungamilia is supposed to have fed in the Alchera upon *Auadaua*, a kind of grass seed, just as did the group of lizard people amongst whom she dwelt. There is, as usual, a special performance connected with this woman which is now in the possession of an Uknaria man of the lizard totem, the woman's Churinga being kept in the store-house at Simpson's Gap which belongs to the lizard totem. Ungamilia has at the present time a living descendant, and during the Engwura the ceremony was performed by the man in whose possession it now is.

Orion they regard as an emu, and the star generally as camp fires, but in general they pay little attention to them, probably because they enter little into anything connected with their daily life, and more especially with their food supply.

Eclipses, etc.

Eclipse of the sun is called *Ilpuma*, and is attributed to the presence therein of *Arungquilta*, the general term used in

The Arunta

reference to an evil or malignant influence, which is sometimes regarded as personal and at other times as impersonal. This particular form of *Arungquilta* is supposed to be of the nature of a spirit individual living away to the west who has the power of assuming the form of any animal. The natives have a very great dread of eclipses, they have, naturally, no idea of the distance away of the sun, believing it to be close to the earth, and the visible effects of *Arungquilta* so close at hand, and so patent, cause them great fear. These believe that the eclipse is caused by the periodic visits of the *Arungquilta*, who would like to take up his abode in the sun, permanently obliterating its light, and that the evil spirit is only dragged out by the medicine men, who on this occasion withdraw the *Atnongara* stones from their bodies and throw them at the sun while singing magic chants – always with success.

The Magellanic clouds they regard as endowed with *Arungquilta*, and believe that they sometimes comes down to earth and choke men and women while they are asleep. The southern Arunta call them *Inja-kinja-tera*, and regard them as the camping place of two great black men.

Mushrooms and toadstools they will not eat, believing them to be fallen stars and endowed with *Arungquilta*.

The Pleiades are supposed to be women who, in the Alchera, lived at a place called Intitakula, near to what is now called the Deep Well. They went up into the sky and there they have remained ever since.

CHAPTER XXIII

Camps

Each local group has a main, permanent, central camp, and here the arrangement of the different sections is very definite. It is represented in the accompanying plan (Fig. 148).

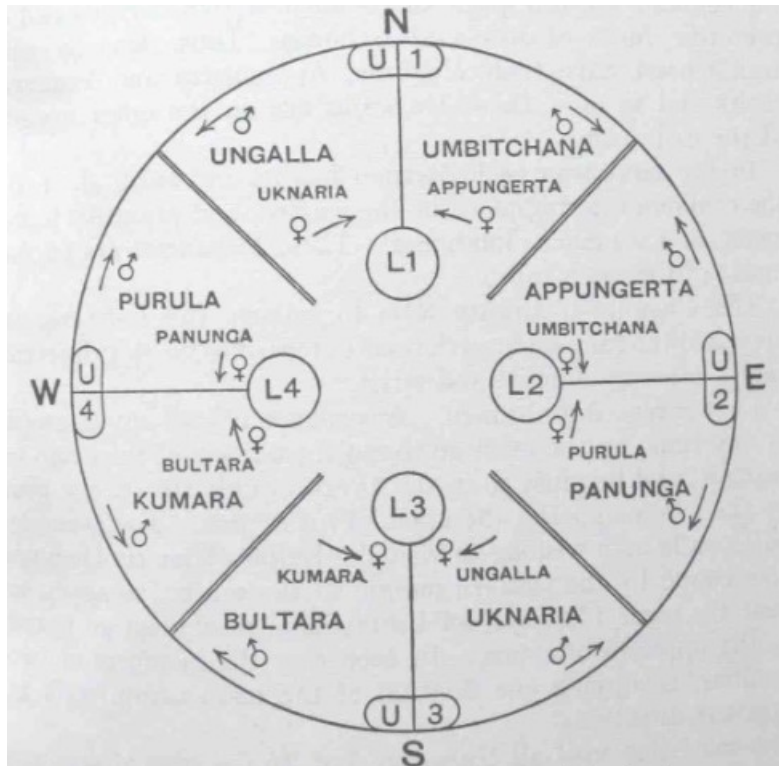


Fig. 148. – Plan of the Central Arunta Camp.

The main camping ground, for example, of the Choritja group, called *Mbainda Choritja*, is situated close to four small, isolated rock hillocks, in the middle of a wide open plain some four or

The Arunta

five miles to the north-east of the present little township of Stuart, hemmed in by mountain ranges on all sides (Fig. 34).

The camp is divided into four main parts like sectors of a circle. The northern is occupied by the camps of the Ungalla and Umbitchana men, the eastern by those of the Appungerta and Panunga, the southern by those of the Uknaria and Bultara, and the western by those of the Purula and Kumara. The individual or family camps and *mia-mias* are dotted over the ground occupied by its section of the tribe but each of the main four divisions has its *Ungunja* (U. 1-4), the common meeting-place of the men of that division and a primitive form of men's club house. Thus, Ungalla and Umbitchana have their *Ungunja*, Appungerta and Panunga theirs and so on. These *Ungunjas* are on the outer margin of the main camp.

In the same way each division has its *Lukwurra* (L. 1-4), the common meeting-place of the women, and primitive form again, of a woman's club house. These *Lukwurras* are on the inside of the main camp.

The *ungunja* is strictly tabu to women, the *Lukwurra* to men, and the rules and restrictions in regard to visiting different camps are very definite and strict.

First in regard to the men. Any man may visit any *Ungunja* at any time, but he must go round the outside of the camp to reach it, and he must go in the direction indicated in the plan by the arrow opposite the name of his section. For example, an Ungalla man wishing to visit the Bultara-Uknaria *Ungunja* goes round by the western margin to the south ; so again, to visit the same *Ungunja*, an Umbitchana man must go round in the opposite direction. In each case the members of two sections, occupying one division of the main camp, walk in the opposite directions.

A man may visit all *Ungunjas*, but, to the men of any one section, the actual camping ground of certain other sections are tabu or *ekeirinja*, as indicated in the following table. He may not enter any part of them except the *Ungunja*, and this only from the outside.

Purula Bultara, Uknaria, are *ekeirinja* to Ungalla men.

The Arunta

Appungerta, Uknaria, Bultara, are *ekeirinja* to Umbitchana men.

Umbitchana, Purula, Kumara, are *ekeirinja* to Appungerta men.

Uknaria, Kumara, Purula, are *ekeirinja* to Panunga men.

Panunga, Umbitchana, Ungalla, are *ekeirinja* to Uknaria men.

Kumara, Ungalla, Umbitchana, are *ekeirinja* to Bultara men.

Bultara, Panunga, Appungerta, are *ekeirinja* to Kumara men.

Ungalla, Appungerta, Panunga, are *ekeirinja* to Purula men.

The only occasion on which these restrictions are waived is the special one on which a man takes his allotted wife away from her camp. If, for example, an Appungerta man has promised his Panunga daughter to a Purula man, then the latter, being told to do so by her father, will go to the Appungerta-Panunga *Lukwurra*, together with some other Purula and Uknaria men who are *Unkulla* to him, and carry the girl off.

If the camps that he may visit are indicated by the figure 1, and those that he may not by the figure 0, then the arrangement in the case of each section, following in the direction of the arrow and counting his own as the first, is always as follows : 1.0.1.0.0.1.1.1.

If we take a Purula man, the men and women in the forbidden camps stand to him in the relation : *Ipmunna* men and *Unkulla* women, in the Ungalla camp (this is an important relationship, because the daughter of these two is the *Mura*, or wife's mother, of the Purula man) ; *Irundera* or *Umba* men, *Mura* women, and *Anua* or *Apulla* women, in the Appungerta camp ; *Umbirna* men and *Qui-itia* women, in the Panunga camp.

Second, in regard to the women. The camps that they can visit are clearly defined. Just as the men walk on the outside of the general camping ground, so the women are obliged to walk on the inside. There are four *Lukwurras*, or general women's camps, corresponding to the four main divisions, one belonging to the Ungalla-Umbitchana, one to the Appungerta-Panunga, one to the Bultara-Uknaria, and one to the Purula-Kumara.³²

32 The names of the camps given are those of the men occupying them. The women in the Ungalla-Umbitchana camps will be, respectively, Uknaria and Appungerta; the children in these camps will be, respectively, Umbitchana and Ungalla, and so on through the various camps.

The Arunta

The women may visit any *Lukwurra* at night-time, but, during daylight, the following are *ekeirinja* or tabu. To Panunga and Appungerta women No. 2; to Umbitchana and Ungalla No. 1; to Purula and Kumara No. 4; to Bultara and Uknaria No. 3.

To the women of any one section the camping grounds of the women of certain other sections are tabu or *ekeirinja*, as indicated in the following table : ³³

Kumara, Panunga, Purula, are *ekeirinja* to Ungalla women.

Purula, Kumara, Appungerta, are *ekeirinja* to Umbitchana women.

Uknaria, Bultara, Umbitchana, or *ekeirinja* to Appungerta women.

Bultara, Ungalla, Uknaria, are *ekeirinja* to Panunga women.

Appungerta, Purula, Panunga, are *ekeirinja* to Uknaria women.

Panunga, Appungerta, Kumara, are *ekeirinja* to Bultara women.

Ungalla, Umbitchana, Bultara, are *ekeirinja* to Kumara women.

Umbitchana, Uknaria, Ungalla, are *ekeirinja* to Purula women.

If the camps that she may visit are indicated by the figure 1, and those that she may not by the figure 0, then, following in the direction of the arrow, the arrangement in the case of each section counting her own as the first, is always as follows : 1.0.1.0.1.1.1.0.

If we take a Panunga woman, the wife of a Purula man, the forbidden camps include men and women who stand to her in the following relationship : *Mura*, husband's mother's brother ; *Quia murra*, husband's mother ; *Uwinna* (Bultara camp) ; *Ipmunna* (Uknaria camp). All camp restrictions are regarded as having been instituted in the Alchera, and are spoken of as *Alchera ekeirinja*.

33 The names of the camps given are those of the adult women occupying them ; for example, the camp of the Ungalla men is that of adult Uknaria women who are their wives.

CHAPTER XXIV

Proceedings Attendant on Visiting Strange Camp.

One feature in connection with all of these tribes with which it is impossible not to be continually struck is the great amount of form and ceremony attendant upon any event which they regard as of importance. They have a very strict code of etiquette, and distinct terms, implying strong disapproval, which they apply to any member of the tribe who does not observe this.

Visits are frequently made, either by individual or by parties of men and women, to friendly groups of natives living in distant parts. If it be only one man who is paying a visit, he will often, in the first place, make a series of smokes so as to inform those to whose camp he is coming that someone is approaching, which, of course, is an indication of the fact that the visitor has no hostile intention, or he would carefully avoid making his presence known. Coming within sight of the camp, he does not at first go close up to it, but sits down in silence. Apparently no one takes the slightest notice of him, and etiquette forbids him from moving without being invited to do so. After perhaps an hour, or two one of the older men will walk over to him and quietly sit down on the ground beside the stranger. If the latter be the bearer of any message, or of any credentials, he will hand these over, and then perhaps the old man will embrace him and invite him to come into the camp, where he goes to the *ungunja* (men's camp) and joins the men. Very likely he may be provided with a temporary wife during his visit, who will, of course, belong to the special group with which it is lawful for him to have marital relations.

The following is what happened when a party of natives belonging to the southern part of the Arunta tribe paid a visit

The Arunta

to the group living in the neighbourhood of Alice Springs, while we were there during the month of May 1901. The account will serve as a good example of the nature of the incidents often associated with such a visit.

The party consisted of some thirty natives, all of them men. On reaching a spot about half a mile away from the main camp at Alice Springs the strangers sat down in the usual way, waiting until such time as they should be invited to approach the camp. Every man wore two curious flaked sticks on his head, and had a tuft of eagle-hawk feathers fixed into his waist-girdle in the small of his back. Each man was also armed with boomerang and spears. After a time they were invited to come up, and did so in the form of a solid square. They approached at a run, holding their spears aloft, and adopting the curious high knee action which is very characteristic of the native on ceremonial occasions. Some of the older women of the local group came out to meet them, gesticulating and yelling and dancing wildly in front of them. As they advanced towards a small flat amongst the hills, where they were to be formally received, a few of the local men stood upon the top of the hills, waving their spears and shields, their bodies sharply outlined against the sky-line. As soon as they had passed through a small gap on the open flat, they were joined by a number of the local men, and then, forming into a series of lines, four deep, they marched round and round, led on by the chief man amongst the visitors (Fig. 149). There was a considerable amount of excitement, and in a very short time everyone in camp – men, women and children – was gathered together on the flat. As soon as the preliminary dance was over the visiting and local people separated, the former sitting down on the level ground, the latter grouped on the rocks to one side. Every man amongst the visitors wore two or more flaked sticks that are called *Inkulla*. These are characteristic of the Arunta people, and in the northern part of the tribe are associated with the idea of fighting and, if possible, killing an enemy. Every individual, for example, who takes part in an avenging expedition wears them. When the expedition has fulfilled its purpose, and has killed the man in search of whom it went forth, these

The Arunta

sticks are broken up and thrown on the body of the dead man.

As soon as the preliminary dance was over the head man of the visiting party collected all the flaked sticks and handed them over to the Inkata or head man of the local, Alice Springs, group. This was intended to express the fact that the visiting party had no hostile intent, but was perfectly friendly. The Inkata then made a fire and burnt them.

There is, however, always a danger when a number of strangers arrive in a camp that quarrels will arise, and once or twice during the subsequent proceedings it seemed very likely that there would be a serious fight. After a short pause three of the local natives, all of them Umbitchana men, went out on to the flat and began dancing about and shouting at some little distance in front of the visitors, who were still seated on the ground. They were taunting one of the visitors, who was also an Umbitchana man, because, as they said, he had not properly cut himself and mourned when his father-in-law, a local man, had died. At length they all threw boomerangs at him, which he avoided. Then in his turn he jumped excitedly to his feet, hurled his own boomerang in the direction of the three men, and ran towards them. When he reached the spot at which they remained standing, he and one of the challengers embraced, and then sat down on the ground with their arms around each other. The man who had been challenged expressed his determination of cutting his shoulder through to the bone, while the other man tried to prevent him from inflicting any very serious injury upon himself. This did not appear to be a very difficult matter, but a good deal of time was occupied in pretence. In the end he inflicted a slight wound on himself with his stone knife, and then they all became reconciled. The same performance was repeated in the case of two other men belonging to the visiting party (Fig. 150).

Then there was a pause for a short time, everyone apparently waiting to see what would happen next, for they were all of them very evidently beginning to get worked up and excited. Suddenly one of the local men called or to one of the visitors, challenging him to fight, and accusing him of

The Arunta

having killed his brother some years ago. The challenged man stood up, defending himself with a shield and making no attempt to retaliate, while his accuser in rapid succession hurled three boomerangs at him. The first two he parried, but the third shattered his shield and inflicted an ugly wound on his arm, after which the old men interfered and stopped the fight.

No sooner was this over than one of the local men accused one of the visitors of undue familiarity with his lubra. In this case both men threw boomerangs, but no damage was done on either side. Then a Bultara man amongst the local group accused one of the visitors of having been the cause of his lubra's death a year ago. All of the visitors now ran to the spot at which the accuser stood (Fig. 151). The local men joined them, and, as usual, the women appeared upon the scene, prancing about, yelling, and gesticulating wildly. Everyone was apparently accusing everyone else of having done something, and for more than half an hour the dispute went on. No sooner was this over than the same man turned round and accused the local Purula men of not having cleared away out of camp when a man who was their *lrundera* (father-in-law) died. They ought, so he said, to have stayed until such time as the grass was green upon his grave, instead of which they had only gone away for a very short time. Once more the hubbub began. The women were much in evidence, rushing in between their respective relatives and anyone who attempted to tough them, at the imminent risk, which they did not seem to consider, of receiving severe wounds from boomerangs and clubs. The older men in vain attempted to quiet matters down ; boomerangs and spears were raised ready to throw, and it seemed impossible to prevent a serious disturbance. Everyone was talking, or rather yelling, at the top of his or her voice. Those who, for the moment, were not engaged in actually challenging or hurling most opprobrious epithets against someone else, or attempting to come to close quarters with them, were busy trying to prevent others from doing what they themselves either had just been or would be doing in the course of a few minutes. It was a most remarkable scene, certainly not without its amusing as well as its

The Arunta

serious side. After nearly three hours of apparently the most intense excitement and high feeling, when every moment it seemed absolutely impossible to prevent a general fight, things quieted down. The last quarrel had, however, served very clearly to bring into view the fact that the tribe was divided into two moieties. On the one hand, the Panunga and Bultara men, and, on the other hand, the Purula and Kumara, took sides together, and in the end the latter, both local men and visitors, retired from the field in company and camped some distance away from the Panunga and Bultara. During the next day relations were rather strained, but after this such ill-feeling as has been aroused died away and harmony was once more restored.

CHAPTER XXV

Clothing, Ornament and Various Implements.

Strictly speaking there is very little amongst any of the Central tribes that can be spoken of as clothing – that is, anything the object of which is to cover any part of the body or protect it from the weather. The idea of utilising the skins of animals for this purpose has not occurred to them, though in many parts kangaroos and wallabies are plentiful. In this respect they are in a lower stage of development than the coastal tribes of the east and south-eastern parts of the continent. The natives are very susceptible to cold, and shiver around their camp fires during the winter nights when the temperature often falls below freezing point in the McDonnell Ranges. The only covering takes the form of small aprons worn by women and public tassels worn by men. The latter articles vary to a considerable extent in size. In the Arunta they are usually small and quite inadequate as a covering ; in fact, they are frequently coated with white pipeclay, which serves the purpose, especially during the progress of corroborees, when large numbers of men and women meet together, of drawing attention to the part which in other tribes they are designed to conceal. They are not often larger in size than a five-shilling piece, and may be even smaller. The string is usually made out of opossum fur, but that of the bandicoot may sometimes be employed. An exceptional form is seen in Fig. 153. It consist of three separate tassels joined together and tied as seen in the drawing. The tassel is fixed by means of a short string on to the pubic hairs.

Some attempt at decorative work is made in connection

The Arunta

with the *Chilara* or forehead-band of the men, for in this part almost all the decorating is done by the men and practically none by the women. The *Chilara* consists of a good-sized skein of opossum fur-string flattened out so as to form a band, perhaps two or three inches in greatest width and tapering at each end. The whole surface is plastered over with kaolin or gypsum, so that the strands of string adhere to one another, and a flat surface is produced on which a design can be drawn in red or yellow ochre. These designs take the form of series of concentric circles, curved lines, straight lines, or spots. The four of them which are figured were in use by natives in the north part of the Arunta tribe (Fig. 152, 4-7). The patterns do not appear to have any definite meaning, but are evidently suggested by those commonly drawn on various sacred objects ; indeed, the resemblance between the decorated *Chilara* when laid flat down and the Churinga is most striking, though there is no real relationship between the two objects, one of which is the most ordinary and everyday article of clothings, and the other the most sacred object.

Sometimes, instead of having a pattern drawn in ochre, the *Chilara* will have a coat of white bird's down. Amongst women ordinary fur-string bands are worn round the head, or sometimes a flat band which is really identical in form with the *Chilara*.

A favourite ornament is represented in Fig. 154. It consists of a band of strands of well greased and red-ochred fur-string with a pendant formed of a small mass of porcupine grass resin into which kangaroo incisor teeth are fixed. It is worn on the head with the pendant hanging down over the forehead. Fig. 155 and 156 represent women's neck bands, one ornamented with wild-dog tail tips, the other with those of the rabbit-bandicoot and small bones fixed in resin.

Amongst the Arunta and Luritcha the women normally wear nothing, but amongst tribes further north the Kaitisha and Warramunga, a small apron is made and worn, and this sometimes finds its way south into the Arunta. Close set strands of fur-string hang vertically from a string waist-girdle. Each strand is about eight or ten inches in length, and the

The Arunta

breadth of the apron may reach the same size, though it is often not more than six inches wide.

Sometimes, and especially during corroborees, the men wear as ornaments suspended from the waist-girdle a bunch of the black and white tail-tips of *Peragale lagotis*. These tail-tips are called *Alpita* and are a very favourite form of ornament amongst men and women alike. Women usually wear them suspended over the ears. Another form of ornament amongst the men is the *Lonka-lonka*, to which reference has already been made in connection with magic. This is made out of the shell of *Melo æthiopica*, or the pearl shell oyster, *Meleagrina margaritifera*, and hangs pendent from the waist-girdle. It is traded down from the north and is widely used throughout the Centre. We have never seen any design incised on the *Lonka-lonka* amongst these tribes, but on similar articles from West Australia the zig-zag line pattern, so characteristic of the part of the Continent, is sometimes present.

In the Arunta and Luritcha tribes the men frequently wear a pad of emu feathers, which varies in size, the largest being about ten inches in length, five in width, and two in thickness. The pad is made by stabbing the feathers together by means of bone pins, and is called *Imampa* (Fig. 152, nos 9 and 10). It is worn on the back of the head, and is fastened on partly by fur-string, which is wound round it and the hair beneath, and partly by means of bone pins. Into each of the upper corners is fixed a tuft of feathers of some bird such as the eagle-hawk, owl or cockatoo, attached to a pointed stick about six or eight inches in length. Sometimes long white down is used, or tail-tips of the rabbit-kangaroo. Very often the tufts of feathers, when no emu feather pad is used, are fixed into the matter locks.

Occasionally amongst certain groups curiously flaked sticks, called *Inkulla*, are used as head ornaments, though amongst other groups exactly the same objects, and worn in just the same way, are used as an indication that the wearer is bent on fighting. Each of these is about a foot or eighteen inches in length. By means of the flint fixed into the end of a spear-thrower, small curved flakes are chipped, one after the other,

The Arunta

so that they follow a roughly spiral line, the first flake being cut at the lowest end (Fig. 157, nos 4 and 5).

Nose-bones, called *Lalkira*, are frequently worn, every native having his, or her, nasal septum pierced (Fig. 152, nos 11, 12, 13). The most common form is a bone, sometimes the fibula of a kangaroo pointed at one end and measuring as much as 40 cm, in length, or it may be the radius of a large bird such as an eagle-hawk. In this latter case one end of the hollow bone is filled with a small plug of resin and the other ornamented with a tuft of feathers or tail-tips. Occasionally a hollow bone is split longitudinally, and one-half of it, with the end and sides carefully smoothed down, is used as a nose-bone. In this case the concave surface is usually decorated with roughly cut lines, which run across from side to side, and there may be a few odd lines scratched on the convex side. Many of these nose-bones are so similar in form to some of the pointing bones that, unless their actual use be known it is very difficult to distinguish them from one another.

Musical Instruments.

The musical instruments are of a very simple nature. The most elementary method of producing sound to accompany the chanting during the performance of ceremonies consists in striking the ground with a shield, spear-thrower, boomerang, or a simple piece of wood. Very often boomerangs are rattled together. In one particular ceremony two short and bluntly rounded pieces of wood are used, which, as they fall on one another, each being held in one hand, produce a clink, clunk, which closely imitates, as it is supposed to do, the sound of the croaking of a particular frog. This particular instrument, called *Wainba*, is only used in one ceremony, the Engwura, and is not allowed to be seen by the women, but there are instruments made of almost precisely the same form, but simply more carefully finished off, which are in common use. The latter are called *Trora*, and are more frequently met with in the south than in the north of the tribe. The simplest of them consists of two carefully rounded pieces of wood, the larger of which measures 23 cm. in length and 4.5 cm. in width

The Arunta

in the middle. At one end it is ornamented with a circular groove, with a shorter groove running close to it, and at the other end with a spiral groove. The shorter piece is 21 cm. in length and 3.2 cm. in diameter, and both have a coating of red ochre (Fig. 158, 6).

In a second form one piece of wood has two prong-like projections from one end. The total length is 26 cm. and of the prong 7 cm., the greatest width is 3.5 cm. The other piece measures 25 cm. in length. When in use the blunt end of the prong is held in the left hand, and the striker is allowed to fall on to the pronged end.

A third form is of a curious shape. One end of it has just the shape of the pronged piece of the last described, while from between the two limbs of the prong passes forwards a piece which is very similar in shape to the simple rounded portion. The whole is cut of a single block of wood, but tendon is bound round the narrow part of the projection which passes between the prongs, evidently with the idea of strengthening this, which is undoubtedly the weak part of the instrument. The prongs in this particular position are simply meant as ornament, and do not apparently serve to vary the nature of the sound produced by the instrument. When in use, the end at the left in the figure is held in the hand and the simple striker is allowed to drop on the prolonged end. The total length is 32 cm., and the width across the prongs 3 cm., the length of the simple striker being 28 cm.

The only other musical instrument known to us is the primitive conch called *Ilpirra*. The use of this in connection with obtaining wives by means of magic charm has already been described. Each is simply a hollowed-out piece of branch of a gum tree. The hollowing out has been done by white ants, but the external crust which the insects left is very hard. Of two in our possession the length of each is about 60 cm. and the diameter slightly more than 5 cm. The external surface has been first of all smoothed down with a flint, leaving shallow longitudinal grooves. Then a coat of red ochre has been painted over the whole length, and at each end the rim has been covered with a circle of resin so as to make the margins smoother. In the one case the exterior is decorated with

The Arunta

alternate circles of yellow ochre and white kaolin, between which narrow circles of the underlying red ochre can be seen ; in the centre is a space measuring 7 cm., in length, and between the yellow circles at either end of this, yellow lines run across each in a slightly spiral direction (Fig. 158, 4).

In the other specimen two rings of white kaolin, about 11 cm., distant from five longitudinal lines of the same colour. When used, the conch is simply placed to the mouth, and by singing through it the sound is intensified. Conchs such as these are, apart from the interesting use concerned with magic, generally used in corroborees.

Wallet and Bags.

In the only in the southern part of the Arunta that anything like a bag made of knitted twine, the latter made of fur or vegetable fibre, is manufactured. These bags used to be traded through from the south, as far north as the McDonnell Ranges, but, as a general rule, the native carries his valuables about in a wallet made sometimes out of the skin of some animal, sometimes out of pieces of bark tied round with fur-string. Another form of receptacle is a primitive skin pouch made by cutting a flap of skin with the fur attached from the back of such an animal as a marsupial, and then, after stretching it in the centre with pressure of hand, it is filled out with sand to the desired shape and allowed to dry in the sun. A skin pouch such as this is called *llarntwa*, and is used both by Arunta and Luritcha men.

In the ordinary skin wallet, procured at Mount Olga, out in the desert region to the south of Lake Amadeus, and consisting simply of a piece of skin of a marsupial of some kind, were found a bunch of emu feathers, as tassel of Peragale tail-tips, a spare flint with chipped edge such as is used for the spear-thrower, tendon with which to mend broken weapons or splice on to the main shaft the tip of a spear, a nose-bone and limps of red and yellow ochre. A more capacious wallet, belonging to a native in the Northern McDonnell Ranges, and manufactured simply out of small slabs of bark tied round

The Arunta

with fur-string, contained a bunch of eagle-hawk feathers, an emu feather chignon, a stone knife in its sheaf, three knouts, a woman's ornament of resin with teeth fixed into the mass, a piece of pearl shell for a public ornament, a nose-bone, several armlets and necklets, and two strands of human hair carefully enclosed in fur-string and evidently used as charms.

In the Southern Arunta bags which are as well formed and skilfully knitted as those in use amongst highly civilised peoples are often met with.³⁴ In many cases the string used is made out of the fibres obtained from the reeds which grow around the margins of the mound springs which exist especially in the district occupied by the Urabunna tribe, from which they are traded north to the Arunta. The one figured (Fig. 158, 1) came from Charlotte Waters, and the art of making these bags does not appear to have been acquired by any of the Central tribes living north of the McDonnell Ranges.³⁵ Around the rim of the bag runs a strand on to which the loops are fixed (Fig. 159) ; the first loop is a short one, the second a long one, measuring 10 cm., while all the others are at most 1 cm., in length. It is worth noting that the manner of attachment of the third to the second varies in alternate

34 These are often used for carrying *pituri* in, and are similar to the well-known dilly bags of other tribes. *Pituri* consists of the dried leaves of *Duboisia Hopwoodi* and is used as a narcotic by the natives.

35 Most excellent bags made out of vegetable-fibre string or finely split rattan or cane are made still further to the north and amongst the tribes on the Gulf of Carpentaria. In some cases they are so closely woven as to be able to hold water or honey.

The Arunta

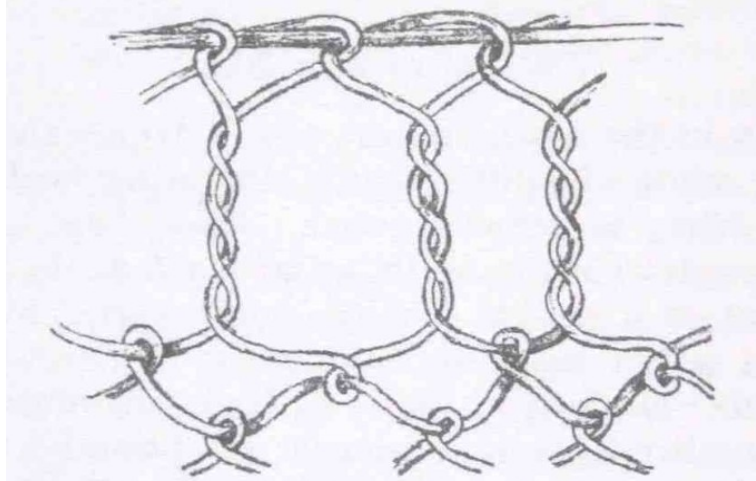


Fig. 159. – Structure of the string bag.

Loop ; in one the upper string of the third loop is twisted round the lower one of the second, and in the other the lower string of the second is twisted round the upper string of the third, and so on alternatively. The loops are so close together that the arrangement is not noticed until the structure is carefully examined, and as there is no particular reason, structurally, why this method should be adopted, it shows that the maker of the bag probably derived a certain amount of pleasure from varying the design. The handle is made of a number of strands of string continuous with certain of the loops on either side ; these strands are again enclosed by two layers of string wound round and round them. The upper edge of the bag for a depth of 7 cm., is coloured red with ochre, and below this four red rings, each about 2 cm., broad, run round. At first sight it looks as if the red had simply been rubbed on after the bag had been made, but closer examination shows that this is not the case, but that the maker used two kind of string, one uncoloured and one which had been well rubbed with red ochre. The series of long, and first two of short, loops are made with red, which forms the first of the narrow red bands running round the bag, then follow ten series of white and again a single red series, then eight white and single red, then ten white and a single red forming the lowest coloured band, below which there are eight white series. Owing to diamond shape of the loops the darker bands have the appearance of shading off at their upper and lower edges.

Spindle.

For spinning fur or human hair into string a simple form of spindle is used. Two curved, thin sticks, each about 14 or 16 cm., in length, are taken, and a slit is made through the centre of each one. They are then placed at right angles, and through the slits a straight rounded stick about 35 cm., in length is passed. The two curved pieces are much nearer to one end than the other, and their concavities are directed towards the nearer which is the upper end when in use.

The Arunta

When working, the native squats in the usual way with his legs bent under him ; with one hand, usually the left, he holds the spindle against his thigh, causing it to rotate rapidly as he rubs his hand up and down in the thigh ; in the other hand he holds the raw material which with his fingers he continually serves out, as the string becomes spun into a strand that becomes wound round the spindle. The accompanying figure (Fig. 159a) represents a man who was engaged in making opossum fur-string, of which large quantities were spun during the Engwura, by men and women alike, for the purpose of making what were passing through the ceremony. As the spindle was moving rapidly, there appears to be only one cross piece, and in some of the spindles, especially amongst the Luritcha, this is actually the case.

Pitchis, Wooden Bowls and Troughs.

There is great variation in the size and form of the *pitchis* used amongst the Arunta and other Central tribes. In the first place, they can be divided into two groups, according to the material out of which they are made. The one includes the hard and the other the soft-wood specimens. The wood usually employed for the former is mulga (*Acacia aneura*) or some species of gum tree (*Eucalyptus*), and is often so hard that it is difficult to understand how they can possibly have been cut out and fashioned, in some cases, into such a symmetrical form by means of the crude stone implements of the natives. The simplest forms are decidedly crude in made, such a one as that represented in Fig. 160 following roughly the outline of the trunk of the tree from which the thick slab of bark has been stripped (Fig. 160 and 161). It is simply a shallow trough widely open at each end, with both the inner and outer surfaces marked with coarse irregular groovings made by a large flint. In other case (Fig. 162) the form is more regular ; the outer surface has the usual coarse groovings, the inner is marked with parallel fine grooves. Fig. 163 represents a very characteristic hard-wood form often met with in the Luritcha, Arunta, and Kaitisha

The Arunta

tribes, but no so frequently in the more northern ones, where the great majority of the *pitchis* are of soft wood. This is to be associated with the fact that the bean tree (*Erythrina vespertilio*), out of which the soft wood is obtained, is much more prevalent in the northern than in the southern area.

Occasionally hard wood *pitchis*, called *Turna* or *Turna ertna*, of wonderfully symmetrical form, are met with, the two represented in Fig. 164 and 165 being beautiful examples of simple native workmanship. Their symmetry of form is perfect. As a general rule the wood out of which these hard *pitchis* is made is dark-coloured, and it is very rare indeed to find any of them ornamented with designs drawn in red ochre or pipeclay. In both of the two last examples the sides are turned up so as to produce a really graceful outline, and as this does not actually make the *pitchi* more useful, and entails a very great amount of labour, it shows that the production of it must afford pleasure to the native. When once the *pitchi* has been roughly chipped, it is ready for use, and after that the finer work is added as opportunity offers. In the case of the implement represented in Fig. 163, for example, the grooving on the internal surface is not yet complete. This is done at intervals, and it is a common thing to find a man in camp seated on the ground patiently spending hour after hour in finishing off to his own satisfaction the surface of the *pitchi*, until finally it is completely covered, as in Fig. 164, with a series of close-set parallel grooves (Fig. 186).

The soft wood *pitchis*, called *Apmara* or *Panda*, are much more easily made. The wood of the bean-tree is so easily cut that there is comparatively little difficulty in obtaining a block of wood and then chipping it down roughly to the required shape. The latter, however, varies much according to the purpose for which it is intended to be used. There are two main types of soft *pitchis* – one being trough and the other boat-shaped. The first type is represented in Figs. 166, 167, 168, 169. It may be either very shallow with almost flat open ends, or the ends and the sides may be curved up to a greater or lesser extent, the extreme form being seen in Fig. 169. A somewhat exceptional form is seen in Fig. 167, which, in external view, is precisely similar to a shield. All

The Arunta

these soft wood *pitchis* are typically covered with red ochre and not seldom they may be decorated with designs drawn in yellow ochre, charcoal and white pipeclay (Fig. 168). Except so far as size is concerned, there is very little variation in regard to the boat-shaped *pitchis* usually called *Terna ertna*. Their outer surface is always covered with fine parallel grooves, and the inner with coarser ones, always arranged in two slanting series, as shown in the illustrations. The largest measures nearly three feet in length and ten inches in height. They are always constructed so that they will stand upright on the ground, and can be rocked about from side to side without easily overturning. They are used for carrying food and water, but for the latter purpose the trough with in-turned upper edges (Fig. 169) is the most useful form. In fig. 172 an unfinished one is drawn. This was obtained from a native, who was busily engaged making the fine outer grooves with an adze, while he held the *pitchi* between his knees. The sides were supported by two staves, which still remain in the implement. When complete, each of the boat-shaped *pitchis* is always coated over externally with red ochre, and may also be ornamented with lines of yellow ochre, charcoal and white pipeclay.

CHAPTER XXVI

Weapons and Implements (Mainly Wooden).

The most characteristic weapons of the native are spears, spear-throwers, shields, boomerangs, all of which he habitually carries about with him when on the march, and, in addition to these, he has stone knives and stone axes. The trading propensities of the Australian natives have led long ago to the dispersal far and wide over the continent of the iron tomahawk³⁶ of the white man, and within the past few years there has been, so far as the Central tribes are concerned, a rapid diminution in the number of stone axes made. As in the case of most of their weapons and implements, one group of natives is especially skilled in making one article, and another in making something else, and the one group barter what it makes for the products of another, living, it may be, 100 miles away.

Spears.

The spears are of various forms, and in different districts at least six distinct kinds will be met with. They may be briefly enumerated as follows : (1) those with stone-flake heads ; (2) wooden spears with one or more barbed prongs ; (3) wooden spears with barbed heads, the main part being made of Tecoma or some other light wood ; (4) spears similar to the latter but without the barb ; (5) heavy, wooden unbarbed spears made out of one piece ; (6) short, light, hand-spears for catching fish.

The spears with stone-flake heads are made amongst the Warramunga and northern tribes and are traded south. The flake is similar to that of the stone-knife, being trigonal in shape, and measuring, in the case of the one figure, 14 cm., in length and 4 cm., in greatest width. It is attached to the spear by means of resin, round which, while it was soft, string

36 Tomahawk : little axe (petite hachette de bois d'origine amérindienne)

The Arunta

made of vegetable fibre was wound (Fig. 173). The mass of resin and string is completely covered with white kaolin, or, in other cases, it may be ornamented with dots of the same, and occasionally a band of red ochre, or of yellow ochre with red spots, is painted round the stone itself, at some little distance from the tip. So far as the shaft is concerned, these stone-headed spears fall into two groups, in the first of which the shaft is all in one piece and in the second it is composed of two pieces. In either case the main part is composed of some

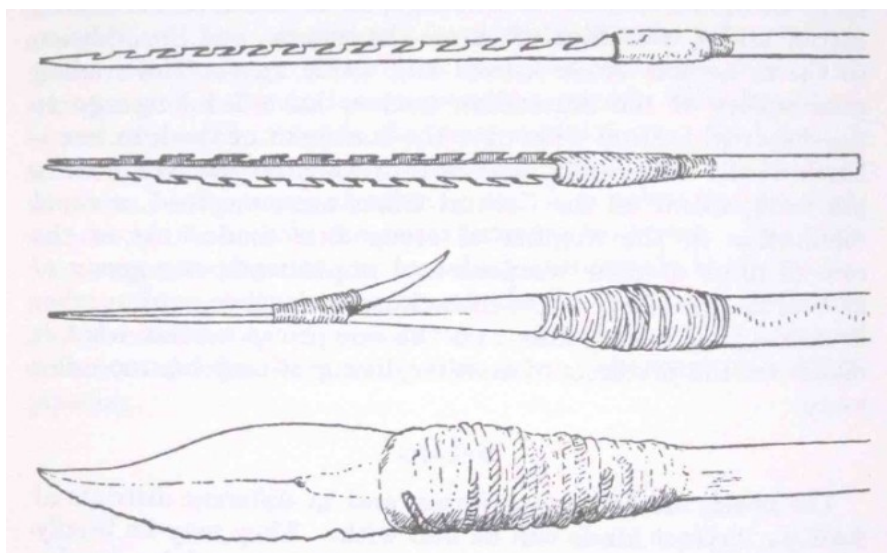


Fig. 173. – Various Forms of Spear-heads.

Light wood which is very liable to split. In the specimen figured the total length of the spear is 2 m. 89 cm. The handle end has the usual small depression, into which fits the point of the spear-thrower, and in three places tendon is wound round to prevent splitting. The whole is covered with red ochre. The total weight of this spear is 538 gm., which will give some idea of the lightness of the wood, as it is nearly 3 m., in length and the stone and resin are included. In an example of the second form the total length is 3 m. 13 cm.; of this 93 cm., at the handle end is made out of a hollow reed, into one end of which the solid part of the shaft is inserted ;

The Arunta

a little resin is used to help in fixing, and then tendon is wound tightly round the junction. The hollow end of the reed is plugged with a little mass of dry fibrous material. Sometimes a little ring of hair-string with a small amount of resin so as to attach it may be wound round the very end, in order to prevent the reed from splitting. The solid part of the shaft is covered with red ochre, the reed being uncoloured. The total weight of the one described, everything included, is 397 gm.

The first form of wooden spear, only made in the north, has one or more wooden prongs which take the place of the stone head. In the variety with only one prong the latter is attached to the shaft just as the stone flake is ; it is possible that a slit may be made in the end of the shaft, but at all events the main attachment consists of a mass of resin round which string is tightly wound, and then this is again covered with resin so that it may be completely hidden from view. The prong has a varying number of backward-pointing, hook-like barbs cut out in a row along one side, the whole prong being slightly flattened in the plane in which the barbs lie. The number of the latter varies on the spears in our possession from five to fourteen. The total length of one is 3m. 12 cm., the prong measuring 52 cm. The end has the usual slight depression, and there is a little ring of resin surrounding it with tendon wound round. The shaft is all of one piece, and the whole weapon is red ochred, with lines of white and yellow added on the prong, the attaching mass of resin being painted white. The total weight is 340 gm. (Fig. 173). In the second variety there are two prongs attached, evidently one to each side of the shaft and so that the two planes along which they are flattened lie parallel to one another with the barbs on opposite sides.³⁷ The total weight is 368 gm.

The second form of wooden spear is the one most commonly met with throughout the Urabunna, Ipirra, Luritcha, and Arunta tribes. The main part of the shaft may be made of one piece of a light wood such as the shoots of *Tecoma Australis*, but it is more usual to have the terminal part made from a separate

³⁷ These multi-barbed spears are not made by the Arunta, but sometimes come down to them by way of exchange from northern tribes.

The Arunta

piece. In the specimen figured (173) the total length is 2 m. 90 cm.; and the short terminal part measures 40 cm.; this is spliced on to the main part, resin is placed round the splicing, and then tendon is wound firmly round this. The Tecoma shoot has to be carefully straightened by heating in the fire and then by pressure of the hands before it is suitable for the shaft, and there is great difference amongst various specimens in regard to the care with which this is done. When sufficiently straight all excrescences are smoothed down with a flint. The blade is always lanceolate in shape and made out of mulga ; it is spliced on the shaft, resin wound round with tendon being used to secure the two parts together. In the one figured the length of the blade is 21 cm., and at a distance of 5 cm., from the point a recurved barb is firmly attached by tendon. There is the usual concavity in the end which is in contact with the spear-thrower. The width at the splicing of the blade is 2 cm., and it tapers to 1 cm., at the other end. The total weight is 595 gm.

The third form of wooden spear is identical with the one just described, with the exception that there is no barb. It is a characteristic feature of these two forms of spears that they are never red-ochre.

The fourth form of wooden spear is much rarer than the two latter, and is made out of a single piece of dark hard wood, which may be derived from some species of acacia, or, so the natives say, from the desert oak (*Casuarina Decaisneana*). One in our possession has evidently been cut out of a long straight piece of wood, the surface being quite smooth and rubbed over with red ochre. It is very probable that spears of this form are traded from some distance, and they are more frequently met with in the south than in the north. The total length is 2 m. 91 cm.; at a distance of about 70 cm., from the point the blade commences, and is distinct from the rest, owing to its being flattened from side to side of the handle part is 2.5 cm. The extremity is bluntly rounded and there is no concavity, as this form is not thrown with the aid of the spear-thrower.

The Arunta

Spear-Thrower.

The *Amera* or spear-thrower is perhaps the most useful of the implements possessed by the native.³⁸ It serves not only as a spear-thrower, but also as a receptacle in which blood and various objects such as red ochre, kaolin, etc., can be placed and carried about during the preparations for a ceremony, and, more important still, the flint, which is usually attached to one end, serves as the chief cutting implement of the native, by means of which he fashions wooden weapons and implements of various kinds.

Each one has the shape of an ovate leaf, the sides of which are more or less turned up so as to produce often a considerable concavity (Fig. 175). In the depth of the latter they vary to a considerable extent, some being almost flat, but none completely so, as is the case in the Western Australian spear-thrower, which otherwise has much the same form. Unlike the latter which is often, indeed typically, decorated with the zig-zag lines, the *Amera* has very rarely any trace of ornament; now and again some native will perhaps incise a few lines arranged irregularly, but we may safely say that on not more than one in a hundred is there any attempt to draw or incise any design. Sometimes it is decorated with a design in pigment for use during ceremonies (Fig. 174). One end tapers gradually so as to form a handle, the other tapers suddenly, and is produced into a blunt process to allow of the fixation of the point. The total length of a very typical and well-formed concave specimen is 76 cm., the greatest breadth 12 cm., and the least breadth, at the extremity of handle just above the terminal lump of resin, is 2 cm. The depth of the concavity is 4 cm., and in various specimens every variation between this and even less than 1 cm., may be found. As a general rule, but not always, they are smoothed down until the thickness of the wood is not more than 3 mm. In those which are less carefully finished off, the marks of the flint used in cutting them can

38 In strong contrast to what occurs in the case of stone knives, axes, and *pitchis*, all forms of which are met with amongst the Arunta, there is only one form of spear-thrower.

The Arunta

be distinguished. Sometimes, but only comparatively seldom, they are covered with red ochre, but this, owing their constant use, is rarely noticeable, and as a matter of fact the spear-thrower, like the ordinary spear, is one of the few things which are not habitually covered with red ochre.

At the distal end and on the concave side, a sharply pointed piece of hard wood is attached, facing towards the opposite end. This is, in all, about 3 cm., in length, but only one centimetre projects beyond the small mass of resin which is used to attached it to the blunt process on the body of the weapon. The amount of resin used for this purpose is far less than in the case of the two types already described, which is to be associated with the fact it is wound with the strong tendon taken from the leg of some animal such as an emu or kangaroo, by which, as well as by the resin, the point is firmly attached to the body of the spear-thrower.

At the opposite – that is, the handle – end is a mass of resin always more or less flattened in the plane of the breadth of the *Amera*, which serves both to give a firm grip to the hand and to hold a sharp-edge piece of quartzite which project from the resin for a short distance, usually has 1 cm. This flint, which is rarely absent, always has a definite form. On the side corresponding to the convex surface it has a single conchoïdal face, the outline of which is almost always convex ; the face corresponding to the concave side has always a number of small facets. Is is by means of this definite shape of the flint that the characteristic groove-shaped marking on the surface of such implements as the *pitchi* are formed ; in fact, the flint of the spear-thrower may be regarded as the most important cutting weapon of the Arunta native, and is used both in fashioning his Churinga, spear, shield, spear-thrower, *pitchi*, and fighting-club, and also in cutting open and, when cooked, in carving the bodies of the animals on which he feeds.

On one or two of the spear-throwers in our possession both edges in the part where the broad blade is narrowing to the handle are marked by very definite crenations, and the crenated surfaces have been rubbed smooth. Though we have never seen it employed for this purpose, it appears

The Arunta

that sometimes the implement is used as a rude form of musical instrument, the sound being produced by rubbing the crenate edge ever a piece of hard wood such, for example, as another spear-thrower.

A very important use, lastly, of the spear-thrower is that of fire-making (Fig. 176). When this is in process a shield made of soft wood is placed on the ground, and then two men, one squatting on either side, take hold of the spear-thrower, and rapidly rub one of the edge of the blades backwards and forwards upon the shield ; in a short time the light wood is charred, then it glows, and with judicious blowing the glow is fanned into a flame. Many shields, such as one of those figured, show rows of these charred grooves (Fig. 177, 1), for this is the principal method of obtaining fire amongst the Arunta, Ilpirra, and Luritcha tribes.³⁹

Shields.

All shields are made of the light soft wood of Sturt's bean tree (*Erythrina vespertilio*). They vary much in size, the smallest one in our possession measuring 62 cm., in length and the longest one 85.5 cm. They are all of an elongated oval shape, with the outer surface convex and the inner concave, the concavity varying much in different shields. The greatest width of the smaller of the two mentioned is 16 cm., and the hole hollowed out for the hand is 9 cm., in length and 10 cm., in width ; the depth of the concavity – that is, to the under surface of the longitudinal bar – which is left running across the hole, is only 1.8 cm. The greatest width of the large one is 30.5 cm.; the hole for the hand is 11 cm., in length and 10.5 cm., in width, and the depth of the same is 2 cm. (Fig. 177, 1, 2, 3).

Together with the *pitchis* made out of the same wood, the shields afford evidence of very considerable manipulative skill and no small appreciation of beauty of form and symmetry of line on the part of their makers. In regard to the Central natives, it is a striking feature that men who live in particular

³⁹ In the southern Arunta the drilling method is also employed, one stick being twirled by the hands upon another held on the ground by the feet.

The Arunta

districts are famous for making particular forms of implements and weapons, and that this is by no means wholly dependent upon the fact that suitable material for their construction is only to be found in the districts occupied by them. Thus the best *pitchis*, made of the bean tree, are the work of groups of natives who live out to the west of Alice Springs ; the best shields are those made away to the north, the best spear-throwers are made in the south-west, the best boomerangs away to the east and north-east, and the best spears in the north part of the Arunta tribe, in the Alice Springs district. The western men, for example, though they have the bean tree and make *pitchis* out of it, get their shields by exchange from the north ; the Alice Springs blacks in like manner exchange their spears for the boomerangs of the eastern natives, and so on. Even in the old traditions we find reference to the excellence of the *pitchis* made by the western natives ; in fact, according to tradition, one of the wandering ancestral groups named what is now called Mount Sonder, Urachipma, or the place of *pitchis*, because here they found tradition may at any rate be regarded as indicative that this distribution of work is of very old standing. It seems generally speaking, to be independent of the existence in any particular locality of the material necessary for the manufacture of any particular article. It also shows that great care must be taken in dealing with the various implements which are commonly found amongst any particular tribe. Every Arunta man is sure to have one of these shields, and yet the majority of them have not been made in the tribe, nor, indeed, within 100 miles of the district occupied by it, but by a tribe speaking a quite different language. Why certain things, such as shields and boomerangs, should be traded over wide areas and be common to a number of tribes, and why certain others things, such as the spear-throwers, for example, should be local in distribution, it is difficult to understand.

To return, however, to the form of the shields. The figures drawn will afford some idea of their nature ; but in all of them especially in the case of the larger ones, the symmetry is perfect,

The Arunta

and with only a flint as a cutting agent, the workmanship is astonishing. In the largest one figured (Fig. 177, 2, 3) the edges on either side curve over in the middle of the length, and then fall away towards either end, so that at the latter the inner surface of the shield in transverse section is slightly but distinctly convex. The surface on both sides is furrowed by shallow grooves, forty-eight on the outer and thirty-five on the inner, which run with perfect regularity from end to end. They are always present on these shields, and indicate the curved cutting edge of the flint with which they are made. As a general rule, the shields are covered with a thick coating of red ochre, though this may occasionally be absent. Sometimes, and especially when used during performances, they

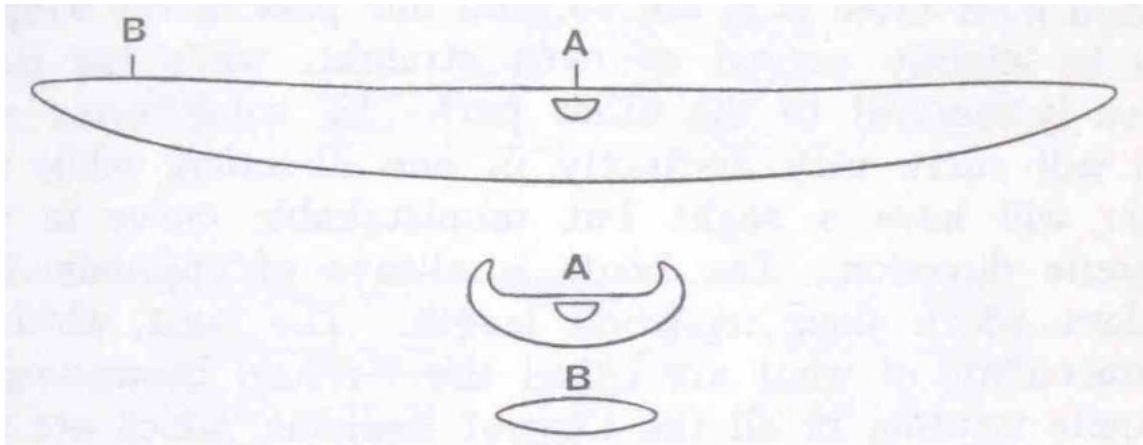


Fig. 178. – Longitudinal and Transversal Sections of the shield in Fig. 177. nos 1 and 3.

may be decorated on the outer side. Two of these forms of decoration are figured. In the larger one (Fig. 177, 2) there is a broad sinuous band of charcoal with three double black lines running across the breadth of the shield, while a very large number of white spots are painted along the course of all the grooves. In the smaller one (Fig. 177, 4) the sinuous band and the little median one have simply been indicated by an additional coating of red ochre, and they are made to stand out by the painting of white spots all over the surface, except along their course, which is thus outlined by the spots. If, as often happens, the shield gets broken, then it is carefully mended by boring holes, and, through these, lashing the broken parts together with tendon which is first of all damped so that it can be drawn tight. In some cases, apparently for no purpose, unless it be with the idea of ornamentation, star-shaped

The Arunta

or sometimes irregular-shaped, patches of resin are let into the wood. There is never, either on shield or any implement with which we are acquainted, any mark, the object of which is to indicate the owner, though, of course, there are marks, such as particular cracks or damaged parts, by which if necessary, a man can recognise his own property.

Boomerangs.

The common form of boomerang found amongst the Central tribes has a flattened and more or less curved form measuring from 60 to 90 cm., in length along the curve. The latter is always an open one, and may be symmetrical though most often it is not so, and one part of the weapon will be slightly curved or even straight, while the main curve is confined to the other part. In some cases one end will curve very distinctly in one direction, while the other will have a slight but unmistakable curve in the opposite direction. The blade is always of approximately uniform width along its whole length. The twist, which is characteristic of what are called the "return boomerangs," is quite wanting in all the Central weapons, which are not made with the object of their returning to the thrower. The workmanship of the weapon varies to a large extent ; the better ones are made in the north-east of the Arunta tribe, and these are marked by regular grooves running, side by side, along the length of the curve on the more convex side ; the other surface is marked by wider and more uneven grooves. In the poorer specimens the grooves are less even and the whole weapon is more clumsy in make and appearance. The Luritcha boomerangs are undoubtedly rougher than those of the Arunta and northern tribes, there being but little attempt to smooth down the flatter side, while the grooves on the other face are roughly cut. In one of these the end held in the hand is narrower than the opposite one, and the grooves terminate abruptly at a distance of 12 cm., from the extremity. This part of the weapon has a roughly scratched series of lines, to allow, apparently, of a better grip being secured.

The Arunta

As a general rule, the boomerangs are coated with red ochre and, in addition, they may be ornamented at the end which is not held with a few rings of white kaolin or yellow ochre. Some of them are certainly made of mulga, but others of a wood both lighter in colour and weight. A boomerang ornamented with incised markings is sometimes met with, but only as a general rule in the southern part of the tribe. It evidently travels from the interior of Queensland by way of a trade route that follows down the courses of the streams flowing from the interior of Queensland southwards across the Lake Eyre basin.

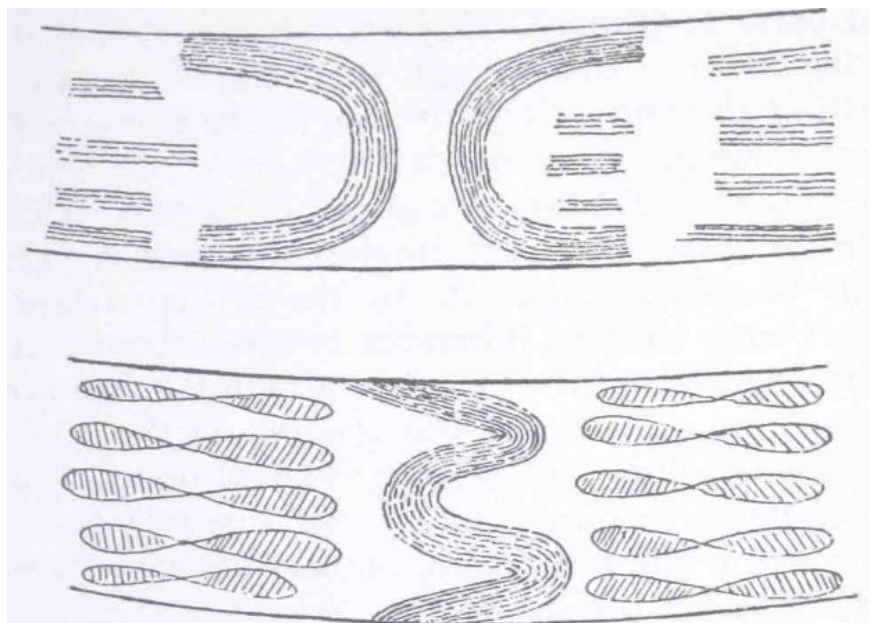


Fig. 179. – Ornamentation of large Boomerangs.

The length on one of these ornamented boomerangs is 88 cm., along the curve, which is a very open one, and there is neither a sharp bend nor any twist in the blade, in both of which respects the weapon agrees with the first described. The width of the blade varies from 6 cm., in the middle, from which it tapers off at either end, to 3 cm., in its narrowest part. On surface is always more convex than the other, and it is, in fact, more distinctly rounded than the grooved form. There is no trace on the convex surface of any grooves, but, from end to end, there runs a series of incised patterns, shaped like the figure 8 laid on its side, the interior of each loop being

The Arunta

filled in with slanting lines (Fig. 179). The flat side is somewhat roughly cut, and no red ochre has been used, the wood employed being mulga.

We now come to deal with a weapon which has sometimes been described as a two-handed sword or club, but which is simply a large boomerang used for fighting at close quarters, and of such a size and weight that it requires the use of both hands. Of the boomerangs of this description, the great majority that are found amongst the Arunta undoubtedly, judging by their ornamentation, are importations from the internal parts of Queensland, just as in the case of the small ornate boomerang, and, though they are fairly often seen in the south of the tribe, they are rare in the northern districts. The largest one measured has a length of 125 cm., and a width of 8 cm., in the middle, tapering gradually to 5 cm., at a distance of 10 cm., from the end. Its greatest thickness is 3 cm.

It will be noticed that in all the forms of boomerangs there is a clearly marked difference between the two sides, not only in the degree of curvature, but also in the ornamentation. In the one case we have the incised design confined to it. The grooved, or ornate side, as the case may be, is always the upper one if the boomerang be held horizontally with the concavity towards the body.

Another distinct type of boomerang which is made in the north, and traded south as far as Charlotte Waters, is of a somewhat remarkable shape. The blade has the flattened form of the Arunta weapon, but, in addition, it is provided at the distal end with a long beak or hook (Fig. 180, 5). The curvature of the blade varies considerably, and the beak, which is flattened like the body, comes off from the convex side, the whole being made out of one piece of wood which is derived from some such tree as a mulga, in which a branch or root was given off at a suitable angle from the main part, out of which the blade has been made. In the blade there are the same variations in shape which have already been described in the case of the ordinary grooved boomerang. The beak varies a good deal in length and width. In one specimen of which the total length is 80 cm., the beak is 26 cm., long and fully 8 cm.,

The Arunta

wide where it passes off from the blade, tapering rapidly to 3 cm. In another specimen, width is 76 cm., in length, the beak is 26 cm., long and only 4 cm., at its base? The convex side of the weapon is ornamented with the characteristic grooves which follow in their direction the outline of the concave edge of the beak. They are made with considerable regularity (Fig. 180, 5), and in the larger ones may be present on both sides, though they are never so well marked or regularly made on the flatter as on the more convex side. Sometimes they may be entirely wanting on the former, which may be merely roughly smoothed down. The beak itself and the end from which it springs may, in addition to the coating of red ochre which covers the whole, be ornamented with bands of white, black and yellow, and lines of spots. It is curious and constant feature that, in each one, the concave line bounding the curved side of the beak is not directly continuous with that bounding the convex side of the blade. The curve ends abruptly at a small but clearly marked projection which is placed at a little distance down the blade ; from this projection there is a little fall of, in some cases, 1 cm., to reach the edge of the blade itself. So far as the making of the weapon is concerned, it would be just as easy to make the two curves perfectly continuous, and it has all the appearance of being done in order to emphasise the idea of there being a head something like that of the flake axes. The decoration also, when any is present, is always on this head end, and in some a single band of black is painted running round the part where the notch occurs, as if again to indicate the junction of the head and handle parts.

The beak is said to catch on the stick or boomerang with which the native at whom it is thrown defends himself, and by its means the weapon, instead of being simply warded off, as in the case of the common boomerang, swings round on the beak and strikes the man at whom it is thrown. We have never seen this occur in the Arunta tribe, but we have on one occasion seen it thrown in the ordinary way, with the result that the beak inflicted a very nasty wound on the neck of the man whom it hit. As might be expected, the beak is liable to be broken off, and we have seen such broken ones

The Arunta

trimmed so as to cut off the remains of the beak, after which they were used for throwing, just like the ordinary curved ones. We have also seen them used in hand-to-hand fights after the fashion of a pick. The Arunta obtain their from the north and call them *Ilya ilporkila*.

Fighting Clubs.

Fighting-clubs are made by the Kaitisha and Warramunga and traded down to the McDonnell Ranges and right away to the south of Arunta. Each one has the form of a long,

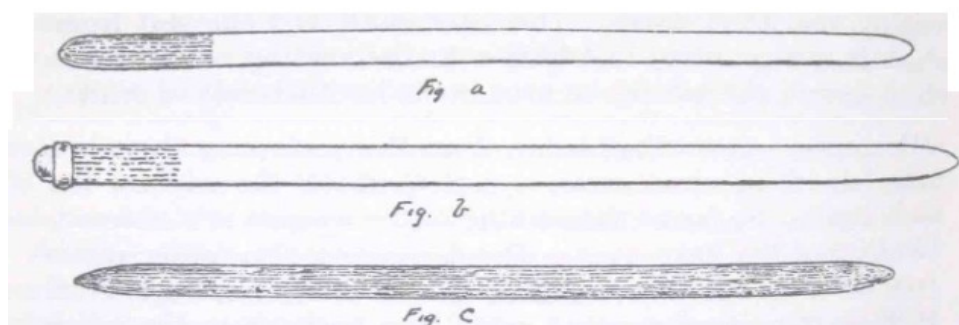


Fig. 181. – Fighting Clubs.

straight, heavy bar of wood, which is sometimes mulga, at others of a lighter colour, but always heavy. Each end is bluntly rounded, as a general rule, and the one which is held in the hand can always be distinguished, because it is either grooved or cut in some way so as to afford a firm grip for the hands. In the one represented in the upper figure (a) the total length is 115 cm., and the diameter 4.5 cm. At one end is a series of shallow grooves running parallel to the length of the club and extending for a distance of 21 cm. from the bluntly rounded tip. This one has apparently been made out of some

The Arunta

species of eucalyptus and has been red-ochred. In the one immediately below it (b) we have a slightly different form. The length is 125 cm., and the diameter 4.5 cm. The end grasped by the hands has a series of shallow grooves extending for a distance of 19 cm., from the end, and across them a number of scratches run in various directions. Close to the end is a ring 2.5 cm., in width, of porcupine-grass resin to aid in grasping. The third (c) represents again a somewhat different type. It is made of mulga or some heavy dark wood. The two ends are decidedly less bluntly rounded than in most of the clubs, and the whole surface is covered, except about 12 cm., at one end, and 6 cm., at the other, with longitudinally arranged grooves. The end grasped by the hands has a few circularly disposed scratches upon it.

These clubs are used in close fighting, and, though employed by both men and women, are most frequently used by the latter. They are often met with, and are always seen in the hands of women when a fight is going on, in which they either are, or may become at any moment, interested parties. The clubs are grasped with two hands, and with them blows are given such as would at once disable any ordinary white man, especially as they are, according to etiquette, given, and received, mainly on the head, but, as this is the least vulnerable portion of the body of a native, the damage done is merely of a temporary nature. Occasionally bones are broken, and we have seen one old woman gallantly continue to fight with one arm hanging broken and useless by her side.

CHAPTER XXVII

Stone Implements.

Stone weapons and implements can be conveniently divided into the following groups: (1) adzes, (2) knives, (3) picks, (4) axes, and (5) spears.⁴⁰ In regard to them, as a whole, the most interesting feature is that one and the same tribe will not only use but make roughly or most carefully flaked stones, chipped stones, and ground axes. It is, however, only amongst the northern and north-western tribes that the most delicately and carefully chipped stones are met with, and from these parts they are traded south (Fig. 184).

The Central Australian natives makes and uses stone implements that can be variously described as Eolithic, Palaeolithic, or Neolithic in form. Apart from the roughly shaped stones that he uses and throws away when they have served some temporary purpose, his flaked knives may be as crude as those of the extinct Tasmanians, while the chipped ones, which exist side by side with the former, are as well-made as any implements associated with relics of the highest culture level of Stone Age man in Europe. Amongst the Central Australian aboriginals it is simply a question of the material available. If they have a supply of quartzite⁴¹, then they make flaked or flaked and chipped implements. As a matter of fact, they always have this material available, and therefore every tribe uses it. In some parts they also have stone, such as diorite⁴², which is suitable for grinding, and then they make, in addition to flaked and chipped knives, the so-called Neolithic ground axe. Had such a tribe as the Arunta become extinct, leaving behind it in the form of stone implements and some rock drawings the only traces of its existence which would have persisted, the modern ethnologist would have been not a little

40 The stone-headed spear has already been described in Chapter XXVI (Vol. II p. 524).

41 **Quartzite** (from [German Quarzit](#)[1]) is a hard, non-foliated [metamorphic rock](#) which was originally pure [quartz sandstone](#).[\[2\]\[3\]](#) Sandstone is converted into quartzite through heating and pressure usually related to [tectonic compression](#) within [orogenic belts](#). Pure quartzite is usually white to grey, though quartzites often occur in various shades of pink and red due to varying amounts of iron oxide (Fe₂O₃). Other colours, such as yellow, green, blue and orange, are due to other mineral impurities. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quartzite>

42 **Diorite** [/'daɪərɪt/](#) is a grey to dark grey intermediate [intrusive igneous rock](#) composed principally of [plagioclase feldspar](#) (typically [andesine](#)), [biotite](#), [hornblende](#), and/or [pyroxene](#). It may contain small amounts of [quartz](#), [microcline](#) and [olivine](#). [Zircon](#), [apatite](#), [sphene](#), [magnetite](#), [ilmenite](#) and [sulfides](#) occur as accessory [minerals](#).[\[1\]](#) It can also be black or bluish-grey, and frequently has a greenish cast. Varieties deficient in hornblende and other dark minerals are called *leucodiorite*. When [olivine](#) and more [iron-rich augite](#) are present, the rock grades into ferrodiorite, which is transitional to [gabbro](#). The presence of significant quartz makes the rock type quartz-diorite (>5% quartz) or [tonalite](#) (>20% quartz), and if [orthoclase](#) ([potassium feldspar](#)) is present at greater than ten percent the rock type grades into [monzodiorite](#) or [granodiorite](#). Diorite has a medium grain size texture, occasionally with porphyry. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diorite>

The Arunta

puzzle by finding, side by side, the most crudely and most beautifully flaked and chipped stone implements and at the same time ground axes.

Figs. 182-185 will serve to show typical forms of very crude flakes, beautifully chipped spear-heads and ground diorite axes, all in use at the present day in Australia. Those in Fig. 182 represent two implements found together in a kitchen midden on Wilson's Promontory, on the southern coast line of Victoria, to which they were brought, long years ago, by the natives to break open the oysters, mussels, and Turbos on which they fed, leaving behind them their flints, axe-heads, and broken shells, scattered about in countless thousands.⁴³ Fig. 183 shows a very typical example of a flaked stone knife with its sheath. Some of the knives are much cruder than this, whilst others show a considerable amount of secondary chipping along one or both of the margins. Fig. 184 shows a series of very beautifully chipped leaf and lanceolate-shaped spear-heads. These are made by northern tribes and traded down south, though they very rarely reach the Arunta, and are made especially in the north-west, some of the most beautiful examples coming from the Kimberly district. The original material used was very close-grained, white or pinkish, opaline quartzite and, very rarely, shell. Nowadays they employ porcelain insulators and glass bottles. These fine and often very delicately chipped knives and spear heads are made by the pressure of a bone implement such as the ulna of a kangaroo (Fig. 184), which is so clumsy that it seems scarcely possible to use it for such delicate work, and yet the fine points and the serrated margins of all of them have been fashioned with this. An expert in the work carries about with him a small wallet (Fig. 185) made of bark, in which he will have a number of the spear-heads in process of manufacture.

At the present day the making of stone implements is rapidly

⁴³ The nearest spot to the kitchen midden on which this specimen was picked up, where flint of this kind can be obtained, is forty miles away, so that it must have been carried to the place where it was used. The kitchen middens amongst the sand dunes on Wilson's Promontory are strewn over with large numbers of these rough flints. The natives have long been extinct in this part.

The Arunta

becoming a thing of the past over the greater part of the Central area. Even amongst tribes that have had very little intercourse with white men, iron is beginning to replace stone, and it will be only a matter of a few years before stone knives and axes will cease to be made and used. Iron tomahawks pass from tribe to tribe. Odd bits of hoop iron are laboriously ground down to a sharp edge, and are beginning to replace the stone axe or spear-head. Prongs of stout wire take the place on spears of the old wooden barbs and stone heads. When once these innovations make their appearance, it is wonderful with what rapidity they spread from group to group.

Adzes.

We will now describe the various forms of stone implements met with, dealing with them in the order mentioned. The adze consists of a straight or curved piece of hard, heavy wood, such as mulga, to one or both ends of which a sharp-edge piece of opaline quartzite is attached by means of porcupine-grass resin. The curved form is evidently more common than the straight one, though here again a sufficiently large series would doubtless show all variations between the most curved and the straight ones. We may really divide these adze into two groups, first, those with the cutting flint at only one end, and, secondly, those with the flint at both ends. Amongst the first group we find that, as a general rule, the wooden handle is more or less curved. The flake is characteristically plano-convex in section, and has a convex cutting edge. It always has one surface very distinctly convex whilst the other may be slightly so. When being made, a block of suitable stone is held in one hand and struck with a small pebble of quartzite until a flake of the desired size is separated off. This flake is then held in the left hand, with the side on which is the conchoidal fracture turned away from the operator, who, with another and smaller block of quartzite, chips the surface nearest to him so as to smooth it down. Finally he carefully chips the cutting edge into shape, so that it is convex in outline and margined with a series of fine chippings, which give to it

The Arunta

a more or less serrated appearance when closely examined. These secondary chippings on the edge vary to a large extent in their number and size. Only one surface of each of the flints used in the adzes is usually chipped, but there is very considerable difference in the size and shape of the flakes and the fineness or coarseness of the chippings, more especially along the cutting edge. In some cases the latter is very narrow, perhaps only an eighth of an inch in width, and almost flat, forming thus a chisel edge, but more often it is about an inch or even more in width and the edge is practically gouge-shaped ; in fact, the term gouge is actually used by some writers. From the manner in which the implement is used the term adze is, however, preferable.⁴⁴

Implements of this form are employed for cutting the series of grooves which ornament the surfaces of their large *pitchis*. The illustration shows a man in the act of doing this (Fig. 186). The *pitchi* was held between his knees, and, grasping the adze in both hands, he spent hour after hour in laboriously cutting a series of parallel grooves, each of them not more than one-eighth of an inch wide and all of them cut with remarkable regularity. As in regard the everything else of this kind, there are certain individuals who are more skilful in the work than others. It is always done by men and never by women, who neither use nor possess adzes.

In the making, again, of the curious flaked sticks called *inkulta*, a native will take a short straight twig of a suitable tree, about eighteen inches in length. First of all he will pare off the bark, using for the stone for this purpose, then, holding the wood in his left hand and the spear-thrower in the right, he will very carefully make the first cut, which results in the peeling off a curved flake, which remains attached to the central stick at one end ; then he will make a second cut to the side of the first and slightly higher up, and so on, one after the other, turning the stick round and round until he has made a large number of cuts, resulting in the formation of a spirally arranged series of curved flakes of wood. The operation looks very simple when one watches

44 The spear-thrower is also used as an adze. It has been described in Chapter XXVI (Vol. II, p. 525).

The Arunta

the native at work, but successfully to make one of these flaked sticks, using only the primitive stone implement of the savage, is no easy matter (Fig. 157, nos 4 and 5).

The illustrations have been chosen so as to show the more important types of adzes, so far as shape and size of the flakes are concerned. Fig. 187 represents one with an especially large flint, which shows the very characteristic single conchoidal facet forming one (the upper) surface. It also shows the chipped under-surface and cutting edge, and the convex outline of the latter. In Fig. 188 we have almost the other extreme in regard to size. An implement such as this will be used for making the finer grooves on *pitchis*, while the former will be used for rougher work, such as the preliminary hollowing out of the block of wood or the making of wider, shallow grooves. Fig. 190 represents one in which the flint is of large size, but, instead of having a convex cutting edge, the latter is almost straight. It will be noticed that there are a good many secondary chippings, especially towards one side, and the result is the formation of a flint that is very serviceable in smoothing down the excrescences on the handle of a spear or adze. A flint of this shape can also be used, if needed, for grooving, by holding the implement slantwise so as to utilise one of the two angles.

There are two distinct forms of handles ; one is curved and has a flint at each end inserted in porcupine-grass resin, or beeswax (Fig. 158, no 2). The other is straight and has a flint at one end only (Fig. 158, no 3). The former is the commoner type ; the straight form is met with out to the west and south-west of the Arunta, and is apparently the usual form in West Australia.

(2) Knives.

The stone knives are of two forms, but the differences between them refers only to the nature of the half, the flake being practically, except so far as size is concerned, the same in all.

The Arunta

The longest free blade that we have measured is 13 cm., and in the case of the larger knives, from 10 to 12 cm., may be regarded as the limits of size within which all of them fall. In the simpler form the head of the flake is embedded in a rounded mass of resin. In the second form the handle is divided into two parts, a flat piece of wood being fixed into the resin. The great majority of the flakes are fundamentally alike in form, any difference between them being attributable, not to deliberate design on the part of their maker, except so far as secondary chipping is concerned, but to peculiarities in the nature of the material used, which varies in texture from a close-grained to a smooth opalescent quartzite. In some form or another quartzite is distributed over a very large area of the centre of Australia. It forms, for example, the relatively hard, thin layer which caps the numerous flat-topped ranges of the Central area, and affords an abundant supply of stone suitable for flaking and chipping.

Each blade has three principal facets, and may be said to be normally trigonal in section. There is always a broad single surface which forms what may be called the back of the knife, the remaining two surfaces being inclined to one another at a very obtuse angle. This angle may, however, be cut off, owing to the presence of a small fourth surface, which, indeed, is almost always present at the handle end, though sometimes concealed in the hafting. In some cases it may even extend as far as the end of the whole blade, which is then, of course, tetragonal in section, the fourth surface being smaller than the one on either side of it.

The shape of the blade varies very much, being sometimes broad in proportion to its length and at others long and narrow, but apparently this is not a matter of design, and depends entirely on the way in which the stone flakes. From the same block of quartzite a native will flake off broad, lanceolate, and narrow or elongate blades, and will use them indiscriminately, so long as the point and edge are satisfactory.

There are certain localities where the best knives are made, and it is amongst the more northern tribes, the Tjingilli and Warramunga, that these are met with. Just within the

The Arunta

northern boundary of the Warramunga country, at a spot now called Renner's Springs, there is a special quarry which has been worked for many years past. The ground is strewn with numberless discarded flakes, which are struck off in scores from lumps of quartzite which have weathered off from the hard quartzite capping of the hill where the quarry is situated. For every flake which is considered good enough to use there are scores discarded. The operation, as we saw it performed here and elsewhere, was a very simple one. The native chose a small lump of stone, which measured about eight inches in length and, roughly, six in diameter, the surface at one end being approximately flat. Towards the other end it slightly tapered away. This end was placed on the ground, and then, holding the block upright with his left hand, he merely gave it a series of smart blows with a little quartzite stone held in his right hand. The first two blows were on spots round the margin close together, each resulting in the detachment of a flake so as to form two surfaces inclined at an angle to one another. It appeared to be simply a matter of chance as to how far this angle ran down the block. As a general rule the two surfaces are not in contact for their whole length. How far this is or is not the case depends simply upon whether the two first flakes lie closely side by side or are separated from one another at their upper ends by a longer or shorter face, which thus renders the blade of the knife tetragonal in section. It will be seen that it is therefore a matter of chance as to how far the blade is trigonal or tetragonal in section. This can, however, be more easily explained by means of a diagram (Fig. 191).

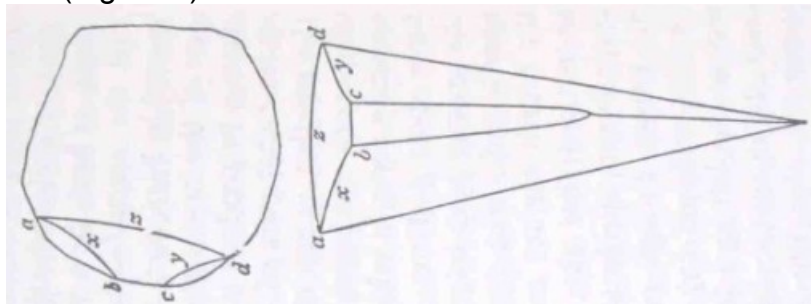


Fig. 191.

The first blow is made at the point marked *x*. This results in the flaking off of a chip lying between the points *a* and *b*. The second blow is made at the point marked *y*. By means of this a second chip is removed from the surface between the points *c* and *d*. If these two flakes run down the face of the block and intersect one another as shown in the diagram, then by means of a third blow at the point *z* a flake like the one figured may be secured. It is simply a matter of chance whether the two points marked *b* and *c* are actually confluent or are more or less widely apart. In the former case the final flake will be trigonal in section along its whole

The Arunta

length, while in the latter it will be tetragonal for a greater or lesser part of its length. In some instances the face of the main block, from which the flakes are being cut off, may have a number of small surfaces more or less irregularly arranged. One or more of these may perhaps be included in the flake as finally separated off, giving to it an irregular shape, but, provided only that it has a suitable cutting edge, any irregularity of this kind, such as is well shown in the case of several of the knives, does not appear to matter at all in the eyes of the natives. Practice at the work is, of course, essential, and there are some natives who are more successful than others, but the making of a really good knife is more or less matter of chance, and the endlee number of discarded flakes shows how long a time is often spent before a satisfactory one is struck off.

Precisely the same flakes which are used as knives are employed also for the manufacture of spear-heads and of the curious pick-like weapons found more especially amongst the northern Central tribes. In fact, the form of the flake before it is attached to the weapon for which it is intended gives no clue, of necessity, to its future use, though as a general rule those of the spear and pick-heads are larger than those employed as knives. However, this is by no means universally the case, though frequently, if a specially large flake comes off, it will be retained for use as a spear or pick-head, while those of medium size will be employed indiscriminately for all three purposes.

In many cases, if the original flaking be not considered satisfactory, additional small chips may be removed from one or other of the two surfaces inclined to one another at an obtuse angle, giving the stone a coarsely chipped appearance.

The Arunta

and further still, one, or perhaps even both, of the edges near to the cutting point may be marked with a series of secondary chippings, – feature more common in the case of those used for spears than in that of other weapons.

Figs. 192-209 represent a series showing the chief variations in regard to the form of the flakes. No two of the latter are ever exactly alike, but it must be clearly understood that the native does not aim at making blades of different shapes, and that any classification of them according to size and shape must, at best, be a very artificial one. What we may perhaps call the normal – that is, the most regular – shape is represented in Figs. 192-193, though at the same time it is actually one of the rarest met with. It is made by three blows that chance to produce a blade trigonal along its whole length, or at least that part of it not enclosed in resin. Fig. 194 represents a very common form in which the fourth surface is evident, but only for a short distance near the the handle. It is, therefore, for the greater part trigonal in section, but tetragonal just at the handle end. Fig. 195 is very a good example of one in which the fourth surface extends right down to the point. It will be noticed that the single surface forming the back of the blade distinctly convex, as indeed it is in almost all of the knives, though more markedly so in some than in others. In FigS. 196 and 107 we have two specimens in which, in the one on the left and in the other on the right side, the lateral facet shows two surfaces due to irregular flaking. These two specimens also illustrate well the variations in regard to form, the one being broad and leaf-shaped, the other long and lanceolate. Fig. 198 is selected as a representative of the more irregular flakes, and one also which has undergone a small amount of the secondary chipping. The original flaking, for some reason, was very irregular at one place, and here, along the edge, a few smaller flakes have been separated in the endeavour to make the form more regular. Fig. 199 is an example of a multi-faceted flake of a remarkable flat form seen in side view. At the actual point there are no fewer than four faces in contact with one another, and one of these has

The Arunta

undergone a certain amount of secondary chipping. Fig. 200 is an extreme example of the presence of irregular facets combined with secondary chipping – in fact, the entire point has actually been produced by the chipping, so that the knife is neither, strictly speaking, a flaked nor a chipped one, but combines the features of both. Lastly, Fig. 201 is an example of a very common form, in which, instead of tapering to a point, there is a terminal cutting edge almost at right angles to the two lateral ones. The facet giving rise to the cutting edge does not correspond to the fourth one present in many of the other knives, but to one of the lateral ones.

There is one special form of knife, of a very crudely and coarsely flaked nature, that is used, apparently, only by the women, the men having the better class of flaked instruments such as we have never seen in the possession of women. This special knife has a short, stout, and very rudely flaked blade of the usual quartzite stone, calling to mind, in its general appearance, the better class of stone implements used by the lost Tasmanian race. It is, however, hafted with a small mass of porcupine-grass resin, so as to make it easier to hold in the hand, and is really more useful as a scraper than as a true cutting instrument.

Fig. 202 represents one of the better class of these. It is really a very crude flake, with the edges chipped all around. Fig. 203, on the other hand, as indicated in the section, is still cruder ; the upper darker surface is the original weathered surface, and the two steep sloping sides are very roughly chipped. Fig. 204, from the point of view of usefulness as a cutting implement, is better than either or the two former, and has the usual back surface formed of a single facet. There is no division into any other regular faces, but there are a large number of very irregular conchoidal facets, so chipped that a fairly good cutting edge is produced. It will be noticed that, in side view, this specimen especially, has a very decided resemblance to the so-called keeled or Rostrocarinate⁴⁵ flints.

So far as the flake is concerned, there is practically no difference between those of the simple resin-hafted and the wooden-hafted knives, except, perhaps, that the larger flakes are reserved for the latter. Fig. 205 is an excellent example of

45 Rostrocarinate – ros·tro·car·i·nate : a chipped flint with a beaklike shape found in the late Tertiary sediments of Suffolk, England, once thought to have been worked by humans but now known to have been shaped by natural nonhuman agencies.

The Arunta

a very regularly-shaped blade ; Fig. 206 shows clearly a fourth facet. Figs. 207, 208, are two with more or less irregular facets. The mark on Fig. 207 is the drawing of an emu track. Fig. 209 shows a good deal of a secondary chipping along one edge.

For the purpose of protecting the blade when the knives are carried about, it is always encased in a sheath made of "paperbark" derived either from an acacia or the tea tree (*Melaleuca leucodendron*). The bark is cut into small strips that are placed lengthwise along the blade and then wound round and round with fur or vegetable fibre string, each strand lying in close contact with its fellows. The whole is then covered with pipeclay, and a small bunch of emu or cockatoo feathers, more often the former, is inserted at the end. When emu feathers are used, some twenty or thirty are tied to a little pointed stick, usually by their tips, so that the stiff quill ends radiate from the end of the sheath in which the stick is fixed (Fig. 183).

(3) Picks.

A very characteristic stone implement met with amongst the Arunta, but really traded down to them from the Warramunga tribe in the north, is a flaked and often also chipped stone, mounted on a long handle so as to form a pick. The blades are precisely similar to those of knives, the specimens represented in Figs. 210 and 211 forming typical examples. Occasionally they may show a considerable amount of secondary chipping. As a general rule, the stones are mounted so that, when held in the right hand with the point downwards, the single back facet lies to the right side, but now and again the stones are inserted in the reverse way (Fig. 197).

The hafting of the pick is carried out in one of two very different ways. This is not a matter of local variation, as one and the same tribe will employ both methods. In the simplest case (Fig. 211) a straight piece of wood about eighteen inches long, cut from a mulga or gum-tree bough, is taken. It is cut so as to taper towards the handle-end, and its surface has a series of longer or shorter grooves corresponding in shape to the curved edge of the flake. The broad end is then slit down the middle so as to allow of the stone being inserted.

The Arunta

The whole of this end is then covered over with a rounded mass of resin, which, together with the handle, is then red-ochred.

In the second method a suitable stem about three feet long is taken from a Hakea, Acacia, or gum tree and cut in half along its length. The bark is removed, and then the middle part is placed over a slow fire, consisting of a small mass of hot charcoal, until it becomes pliant. If it be not straight enough to please the operator, any slight twist is removed by gradual pressure after the application of heat. During the process the withy is constantly removed from the fire and tested to find out whether or no it can be bent round without breaking. When this can be done, it is at once bent double round the stone and tied together by two bands of sting made out of fur, vegetable fibre, or perhaps most often human hair. The stone is then firmly fixed in position by resin, which more or less completely covers the bent end of the withy (Fig. 210).

Now as to the use of the flaked stones. In the first place, the nature of the stone out of which they are made renders them entirely unfitted for cutting hard material such as wood. They can only be of much service for cutting flesh, and it is in reality for this purpose that they are made. They are, of course, well adapted for cutting through the skin and flesh of animals, such as wallaby, kangaroo, and emus, on which the natives feed. In addition to this, they are constantly used during fights and in connection with certain ceremonies such as those attendant upon mourning and initiation. The very numerous scars which mark the bodies of the great majority of the natives are all produced by cuts with these stone knives, and there are very many occasions – as, for example, the one shown in the illustrations (Fig. 150) – upon which the men will use them to cut their arms round one another, and with their stone knives will cut into the fleshy part of each other's backs and thighs. These fights and markings of the body, and what we may call ceremonial cuttings, are constantly taking place, and, in addition, there are rites, such as those of circumcision and sub-incision, and that of *arilta kuma* performed upon women, during which the knives are used.

The Arunta

A very various features about these knives is that though numbers of them are seen in the hands of the men, it is a most rare thing to come across one which shows any trace of having been used. Those now in our possession, which we actually saw in use during mourning and initiation ceremonies, are perfectly clean, and look as if they had been newly made and never soiled in any way by use. The reason of this is that, in the first place, blood does not easily attach itself used is carefully cleaned ; sometimes, indeed, the blood has to be removed by the mouth of some special individual, but in other cases it is always washed off, so that no traces of it are left behind.

(4) Ground Axes.

At the present day ground axes are much less common than flaked implements, which is to be associated with the fact that the material suitable for making them is only found in relatively few spots in the Central area of the continent. In the McDonnell Ranges there is a special quarry where supplies of diorite used to be obtained , but the making of ground axes has now practically ceased in this part. Amongst northern tribes they are still made, but it will not be many years before they entirely disappear. We witnessed the complete operation on several occasions, as carried out by a member of the Warramunga tribe, who was supposed to be especially skilful in the art. In each case a large rounded diorite pebble was taken. By means of a small lump of hard quartzite the stone is first of all very roughly chipped down to approximately the required size and shape. At this stage it has the appearance seen in Fig. 212, which is drawn from one of these stones in course of manufacture. This process occupies only a comparatively short time, but during its performance the operator has to be very careful not to spoil the stone. A mistake in the cutting off of a flake might remove a part of the surface which is to form the edge, and so render it useless, or too hard a hit might result in breaking the stone in two.

When the preliminary flaking which determine the shape of the axe is over, there follows the tedious operation of levelling

The Arunta

the surface. For this purpose the operator takes a small rounded pebble of quartzite, and hour after hour, for a day or two in succession, he will patiently hammer away or rather tap at the rough surface, each stroke removing a fragment of the stone, until the whole surface is covered with minute dents and all irregularities are smoothed down. In a well-made axe this operation is performed so thoroughly that all traces of the first-made rough flaking are removed (Fig. 213). There is, however, great variation in the respect, and the older axes, as general rule, are much superior in workmanship to those of the present day. The exact shape of the axe varies much, according to that of the original block of stone. Sometimes it is broad and flat, at others longer, narrower, and more bulky.

When the hammering operation is completed there follows the grinding-down process. For this purpose one of the ordinary flat blocks of sandstone employed for pounding ochre or grass seed is used. Sitting down on the ground, with the stone between his knees, the operator takes a little fine sand, strews this over its surface, and then, sprinkling water over it, rubs the axe-head backwards and forwards. Every now and then he scatters as he grinds so as to produce the two smooth surfaces which unite at the curved cutting edge, the exact shape of which has been previously determined by the preliminary flaking and chipping (Fig. 214).

When the stone has been thus prepared, there comes the hafting. For this purpose a withy is made, exactly as already described in connection with the pick. It is bent round the blunt end of the stone, so that usually a small portion of the latter projects beyond the level of the wood. The two halves of the withy are bound together with one or two bands of string. A lump of porcupine-grass resin is softened by heat and pressed in between the withy and the stone, usually completely enclosing the head of the latter, and sometimes, but not often, enclosing also the part of the former that bends round the stone. The resin is finally smoothed down (Figs. 215, 217) by a smouldering fire-stick, which is passed backwards and forwards over it. The next and final operation merely consist in grinding some red ochre and smearing this

The Arunta

all over the handle, a pattern drawn in red, white, and yellow being sometimes added to the stone by way of ornamentation.

Ground axes of this kind are principally used for such purpose as cutting blocks of wood out of trees, chips out of the trunks of trees to aid in climbing, or for cutting branches open in search of animals or eggs or "sugar-gab," as the comb of the wild bee that forms its hive in hollow boughs and tree trunks is called. The most unsatisfactory feature of the Central Australian axes is the method of hafting, and it is a curious fact that the natives have not used string for this purpose. The axes are at best clumsy tools, and a hard blow is very likely indeed to crack the resin and thus loosen the axe-head, though, as the resin is easily softened and readjusted, this merely means a loss of time, which is not a very serious matter to a savage.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Decorative Art

The Arunta native, while he has not reached the stage of decorative art of the inhabitants, for example, of New Guinea, still shows more artistic capacity than has generally been granted, or indeed shown to exist, amongst the various Australian tribes.

His rock paintings are closely similar to those described as occurring in different parts of the continent, but, in addition to them, the designs and decorations concerned with his ceremonies are of a very definite and often elaborate description, revealing considerable appreciation, not only of form, but also of colour.

His weapons and implements are of a very simple nature, and as a general rule, while their form is good and their workmanship, so far as it goes, is often excellent, but little trouble is taken in the way of ornamenting them either with painted or incised patterns or with raised carvings. We have never met in Central Australia with any attempt to take advantage of natural peculiarities in the material out of which the object is fashioned. A peculiarly shaped knot or the root end of a stick out of which he is embellishing his weapon with a design or rudely outlined carving to represent some natural object that is familiar to him. The graceful curves and the symmetry of outline of many of his common implements, such as the *pitchis*, shields, and spear-throwers, often strike the eye at once, but without exception any excrescence is carefully smoothed down, and the only ornamentation takes the form of a coating of red ochre, with perhaps a rude design in black lines and spots of white, black, and yellow. The most striking feature with regard to decoration amongst the Arunta and all Central natives

The Arunta

is the constant and plentiful use of red ochre and grease. It may perhaps be that this due to the fact for ages past the natives has been accustomed regularly, which are stored in hiding-places amongst the rocks, and this, again, may be associated with the fact that they are thereby protected to a certain extent from the ravages of insects such as the white ant. From the sacred objects the practice may have been passed on the everyday implements, and so to some extent, as any raised carving would prevent easy rubbing, this may have acted as a deterrent to the development of ornament of this nature. At any rate, whatever be the reason, no implement or weapon is ever really carved, or has painted upon it anything but the simplest form of design. This is all the more strange because the native is quite capable of working in both wood and soft stone such as kaolin, as may be proved by an examination of work of this kind he does in imitation of what he sees the white man doing.

He has a very distinct appreciation of colour, though naturally, so far as his ornamentation is concerned, he is owing to lack of material, rather restricted in this direction, and confined to the use of only a few colours. The Arunta native has distinctive names for only four colours ; red is *tutka*, white is *churunkura*, black is *urapulla*, yellow is *tierga* (or *turga*), the same word being also used for green and blue. These indicate the colours of the materials that have been available to him for use during the performance of his ceremonies. He calls red ochre *ulpa* or *perta tutuka* ; yellow ochre *ulpa* or *perta tierga*; white pipeclay *perta churunkura* ; a red leaf *ilpilla tutuka* ; a green or yellow leaf *ilpilla tierga* ; lime, or limestone, *erulla* (earth) *willia* (soft) *churunkura* (white) ; charcoal *purka* ; blue sky *alkira tierga tierga* . An aboriginal is now called *mberga urapulla* ; a white man *mberga churunkura*.⁴⁶

His appreciation of colours has, of necessity, been limited to those of the four pigments available to him. Just as amongst flowers, blue is the highest and latest to be developed, so, amongst human beings, blue seems to have been the latest pigment

⁴⁶ *Mberga* is the term applied to a whole body, whether of an animal or plant.

The Arunta

discovered and appreciated, and it was never used by any Australian savage. There is no natural blue pigment available to him amongst the materials forming part of his environment. The nearest approach to it is was, manganese ore only rarely met with, which, when powdered, has a bluish-grey tint, for which he uses the same name as for black. It is not simply a case of his having one word to describe two or three colours which, in reality, he regards as different from one another. He does not, apparently, distinguish the one from the other. It is somewhat difficult to express this matter accurately. If, for example, an Arunta native is shown black, brown, and grey objects, such as skeins of wool or coloured cardboard, he will apply the same colour term to each of them. On the other hand, if shown an object of a particular shade of colour, such as that of his own skin, and asked to match this with one of three or four shades of chocolate brown, he will, after consideration, usually decide upon the correct one. Black and all varieties of brown and grey are, apparently, only what we call "shades" of the same colour, indistinguishable to him from one another, unless placed side by side.

A very striking feature of his decorative art is the use which he makes of down derived either from birds such as the eagle-hawk, or from the involucral hairs of different species of plants. The down thus obtained he mixes with pipeclay or red ochre, and employs to ornament his ceremonial objects. With the aid of such materials, he produced simple, bold designs of circles, spirals, and symmetrically curved lines, which are by no means devoid of artistic feeling. It is a curious fact that while the natives continually tinge down with red ochre, they never, or only extremely rarely, use yellow for this purpose. The latter, however, is often used as a background on which a mass of white dots is painted. All of the designs show an appreciation of strong contrasts such as are afforded by black or red circles or spiral and curved bands enclosed and outlined by a mass of white dots.

The origin of these geometrical designs is quite unknown, and their meaning, when they have one, is a purely conventional one. Thus, for example, a spiral or series of concentric

The Arunta

circles incised on the face of one particular Churinga will indicate a gum tree, but a precisely similar design on another Churinga will indicate a frog. The drawing of these spirals and concentric circles is apparently much more frequently met with amongst the central tribes than amongst the southern and eastern coastal tribes, and is associated to a large extent with the possession of Churinga, on which they form a very characteristic ornament. As a general rule, but not invariably, they indicate the principal object supposed to be represented in the design. This may be the totemic animal or plant of the totemic ancestor, or it may be a tree or rock at which the ancestor is supposed to have lived. It is very probable that the circles drawn on rocks and on articles such as the forehead bands of the Arunta, which have no sacred significance, were originally derived from the marks on the Churinga. There is nothing whatever sacred about the circles as circles ; they are only regarded as such when drawn on an object which itself is sacred or Churinga. Undoubtedly many of the ordinary drawings are the result of the artist's recollection of what he has seen on sacred articles, it is only in the centre of the continent that the concentric circle and spiral design are constantly met with. The squares and zigzags of the western natives have almost certainly been derived as a further modification of the concentric circle design.⁴⁷ There is a sharply marked division of the native tribes into two main groups so far as this question is concerned. Roughly speaking, a line drawn from the head of Spencer Gulf to the southernmost point of the Gulf of Carpentaria will divide Australia into two main parts, a western and an eastern. The former can again be subdivided into a central and western, the one with its characteristic ornamentation of spirals, concentric circles, and curved lines, the other with squares and zigzag lines. These schemes of decoration are rarely met with in Eastern Australia, where the art shows a decided tendency to be more imitative.

⁴⁷ A circle is called *kainda-kainda*, four concentric circles are *tera-ma-tera kainda-kainda*, a large number of concentric circles as incised on the Churinga are *injaira oknirra kainda-kainda*. A square is called *irara-rura*, three squares are *tera-ma-ninta irara-rura*, a number of concentric squares is *injaira oknirra irara-rura*. Straight lines are simply called *aradjina* ; three straight lines, for example, are *tera-ma-ninta aradjina*. Curved, wavy, or zigzag lines are *ingurda-ingurda* or *luda-luda*.

The Arunta

So far as the method of ornamentation are concerned, we can distinguish the following :

(1) Incision by means of a tooth or sharp edge of a flint. In the case of the Churinga, both wood and stone, the design is always made by means of an opossum tooth.

(2) Burning with a fire-stick. This method is confined, so far as we are aware, to the ornamentation of some of the pointing-sticks.

(3) Painting the surface with ochre, pipeclay, or charcoal. This is the most frequent method of ornamentation, and is employed in the drawing of designs on the body, as well as on implements and object of all kinds, and also on rock and ground surfaces.

(4) Decoration with down derived from birds or plants. Designs are drawn with this material upon the body and also on ceremonial and magical objects.

So far as the nature of the decorations is concerned, we can divide them into three groups : zoomorphs, phytomorphs, and geometrical designs. It must, however, be borne in mind that some of those included amongst the last may very possibly be the derivatives of one or other of the first two groups, which have become so modified in course of time that their original significance is completely lost. At the same time, their meaning and origin are completely unknown to the natives.

In describing them it will be more convenient to refer to them under the headings of the various implements, weapons, ceremonial objects, and ceremonies with which they are associated. From this points of view they fall into the following groups : (1) designs on implements and weapons of various kinds, (2) decorations concerned with ordinary corroborees, (3) decorations concerned with sacred ceremonies, (4) designs drawn on Churinga, (5) rock and ground drawings.

1 – Designs on Implements and Weapons.

There are two entirely distinct series of these, the one consisting on incised lines and the other of designs drawn in coloured material, though occasionally both types of ornament may occur on the same object.

The Arunta

Amongst the incised ornamentations the simplest form which may perhaps be included under this head, consists of the finer or coarser groovings which ornament the surfaces of many of their objects. In its simplest form it is constantly present on the more convex face of the boomerangs, both the ordinary and the pick-shaped ones. The lines of the grooves follow the length and curve of the weapons. The reverse side is only marked by very coarse and shallow grooves of varying extend. The *pitchis*, again (Figs. 162, etc.), are ornamented externally and sometimes also internally by grooves of different widths, cut with remarkable regularity, and every shield in the same way has longitudinal series on its outer face.

The ornamentation above referred to is of a general nature and does not give rise to a pattern. In other cases, however, the incisions are arranged so as to form one. Boomerangs ornamented with such patterns are commonly met with in the interior of Queensland, whence they are evidently traded down south along the eastern side of the central area – not through the central tribes – until they reach the Lake Eyre district. Thence they pass northwards on the west side of the lake through the Urabunna tribe, and then on into the southern part of the Arunta tribe, though they are never met with in the northern parts of the latter. This type of boomerangs is a very distinct one, and is never found amongst the true central tribes except as an importation. It can easily be distinguished from those of the central tribes, even when they carry, as they occasionally do, incised patterns, by the simple fact that it is never red-ochre, while all of those indigenous to the centre are thus coloured.

For the only specimens known to us of true boomerangs indigenous to the Arunta tribe, that carry an incised pattern, we are indebted to the kindness of our friend Mr. C. E. Owle, who obtained them amongst the south-western groups of the tribe. They are all marked by an absence of the usual flutings and by the presence of an abundant coating of red ochre. In the simplest form (Fig. 218) the more convex side is ornamented with a large number of pairs of short, straight grooves, which are very roughly and more or less irregularly arranged

The Arunta

along lines running transversely across the surface ; in fact, it would be difficult to conceive of a more primitive method of producing anything like a pattern. The same form of grooves may be longer and more regularly arranged, giving rise to alternate smooth and incised bands (Fig. 21), or they may (Fig. 220) be grouped together and scattered more or less irregularly over the surface. In other cases again the bands of grooves may be distinctly marked, but only separated by a mere line from one another, except perhaps at one or two places where there is a smooth band ornamented by two or more series of curved, incised lines (Fig. 220). In other cases there may be groups of both straight and curved lines of varying length scattered over the surface. In this example, as well as in that shown in Fig. 222, there is an evident, though slight, attempt to arrange the series of lines into groups, but there is no definite pattern formed.

All of these boomerangs are ornamented with similar patterns on the reverse side, with the exception of that shown in Fig. 221. A small portion of this is represented on an enlarged scale in Fig. 221. It shows a pattern which we have only met with on one other implement – a fighting-club from Lake Eyre. It has exactly the appearance which would be produced by working a gouge in zigzag fashion across the surface. By the juxtaposition of two series of these incisions a distinct floral design is produced, which, were it met with alone, might be most naturally regarded as phytomorphic in origin – as, for example, in the end pattern on the right-hand side, which looks as if it were an attempt to imitate a fern frond or perhaps a cycad leaf. It is interesting also to notice how a modification of the design, in which only the terminal parts of the cuts remain, gives rise to a pattern calling to mind a centipede, or perhaps more still, the conventional mountains as indicated on old maps. That this is a modification of the more complete series of cuts can be seen clearly in the upper part of the pattern next to the end one on the right side. It may be added that the weapons is of pure native workmanship, without the slightest trace of any influence of a white man or his tools.

In Fig. 223 we have an example of a large fighting boomerang with a very clearly marked design. To a certain

The Arunta

extend the surface is divided into sections, though at the left side two of them are, as it were, run into one another. At the right side are two transverse rows, each consisting of four groups of grooves. Then comes a space with a row of short lines running across its central part.

So far as painted designs are concerned, the great majority of implements and weapons are merely coated over with red ochre, but in some cases a special design may be added. As a general rule this is strictly geometrical in nature, and it is extremely rare to meet with any design which can be recognised as a biomorph. The natives themselves say that these decorations have no meaning of any kind, and that they are merely added to make the object look better.

The simplest form of this type of decoration consists in a coating of pigment applied to some part of an implement, such as the resin mass attaching the stone head of a spear to the shaft, or in an often roughly drawn series of lines done in white pipeclay, charcoal, or ochre. In some cases the *pitchis* shows a very simple line ornament, as seen in Fig. 171, where bars of black and yellow decorate the two ends, running transversely across the object. The hatchet drawn in Fig. 224 shows a very simple form of line and band ornament. There is, first of all, a band of white pipeclay around the resinous attachment, and one passing at right angles to the withy, across the top of the axe. Round the stone itself three bands of red ochre have been painted, and these have been still further decorated with somewhat irregular lines of pipeclay.

Sometimes, but only very rarely, colour may be employed to draw attention to , or at least the emphasise, a structural feature.

The best example of line and dot ornament is to be seen on some of the boomerangs. Apart from the constant thick coating of red ochre which covers all of those from Central Australia, it is not very often that ordinary boomerangs are thus decorated, and when they are, all that is usually done in paint a few bands in black or white at one end. The lines may run transversely, or longitudinally, or both. Occasionally, however, a more elaborate design may be added, such as is shown in the three drawings representing boomerangs from the Warramunga tribe.

The Arunta

In one of them, a beaked boomerang, there are three bands of yellow ochre close to the head end, on which are drawn a large number of black dots (Fig. 225). This form of decoration is the one commonly used in the case of this peculiarly shaped weapon, though very often the yellow band is absent, and there are simply lines of black or white dots. In the case of the other two, which are ordinary throwing boomerangs, the design consists of black lines and white dots (Fig. 227 and 228). The black is simply charcoal mixed with grease, and into the pigment and then used as a brush. After that a short twig is taken, the end of which is of about the same diameter as it is desired to make the dots. First of all it is cut off square, and then frayed out with the teeth so as to form a primitive but effective brush. The pipeclay is most usually moistened in the mouth. It is a somewhat curious scene to watch a number of natives chewing the pipeclay, which has been previously roughly powdered (Fig. 226), and then spitting the semi-fluid material out into a *pitchi* or receptacle of some kind. One would think that the grit would be very objectionable, and that it would be much simpler and more pleasant to grind it down and mix it with water on a stone ; but though this is sometimes done, it is more usual, when preparing material for ceremonies, first of all to grind the pipeclay until such time as it has the consistency of coarse sand and then to chew it in the mouth. When all is ready, the twig-brush is dipped into the white paste, and then simply dabbed down on to the surface of the object being decorated, on which it forms a white disc of the same size as the end of the brush. It is very simple and effective way of producing a flat, circular disc. It will be noticed that the symmetry of the drawing in Fig. 228 is very marked, and that in both of them the lines and dots have no definite relation to the original longitudinal flutings, being arranged quite independently of the direction in which they run. In neither case has the design any special meaning : it is purely a geometrical arrangement of lines and dots drawn without any idea of imitating or suggesting any natural object.

The Arunta

2 – Decorations Concerned With Ordinary Corrobborees.

The various ceremonial objects may be divided into two series, according to whether they are used during ceremonies such as the ordinary corrobborees, which may be witnessed by men, women, and children, or during the sacred ceremonies.

Each corrobboree has its own decorations, though there is considerable uniformity in regard to these. In the Arunta tribe, the dances are spoken of as *altherta* or *indala*. Each performer wears a head-dress, which is usually conical in form, but may be cylindrical. The one most commonly used is made out of a number of twigs of a shrub such as a cassia, which are placed with their bushy ends on the head and the main stems projecting upwards and backwards (Fig. 229). They are tied round and round with human hair-string, and then a design of a more or less simple nature is painted on them with down the design being usually continued below on the face. Very often it consists of a central wavy band of red enclosed by white. On the face there is usually a band of the same colours across the forehead, another over the bridge of the nose, and one on each cheek, which again is often continuous with bands passing on to the shoulder and down each side of the body as far as the knee. Very often the tip of the helmet is decorated with a tuft of feathers. Another very common form of decoration consists of a series of bands of down running horizontally across the helmet parallel to others on the face (Fig. 230). The body is ornamented with curved bands, or sometimes with circles of down. A double band on each side usually extends as far as the knee, and those of each side, arching over, meet one another in the middle line above the navel. It is a very general thing for the performers to have bundles of leafy twigs tied round the legs just above the ankles. In these ordinary corrobborees the down used is obtained from the involucre hairs of a species of *Portulaca*; bird's down is reserved, almost exclusively, for use in sacred ceremonies. The only exception to the latter rule with which we are acquainted takes place in the Tjitjingalla corrobboree, which is apparently identical with that described by Roth

The Arunta

in western Queensland under the name of Molonga.⁴⁸ Ordinary corroborees such as this are constantly handed on from group to group and tribe to tribe. The words of the songs are passed on with the dance, and usually have no meaning to the performers, because they belong to the language of a distant tribe. The Tjitjingalla corroboree seems to have originated in Queensland, and to have travelled along two routes, one down the centre of the continent and the other more to the east, through tribes along the river-courses of the Darling basin, until it reached the Wonkgonaru and Dieri tribes on the north and east sides of Lake Eyre. In the closing scene of the Tjitjingalla, one man was specially decorated with lines of birds' down and wore on his head-dress a number of tufts of feathers attached to whort sticks, which projected in a radiating way. He also carried a long wand, decorated at its upper end with a large tuft of owl feathers. The whole of his helmet, the upper part of his face and arms, and the while of his body, as far down as the waist-girdle, were one mass, of wavy lines of red and white down. The other performers were decorated in the usual way with plant down (Fig. 231). The most elaborate decoration is perhaps that used in the case of one of the rain dances, in which a flat piece of wood, in shape resembling a large Churinga, is fixed into the top of the helmet and ornamented with lines and concentric circles of spots done in red, white, and black and tipped with bunches of owl and eagle-hawk feathers. In the ceremony represented in Fig. 232 each of the performers, eight in number, carried one of the heavy, unwieldy slabs on his head whilst they danced with the usual high knee action, stamping vigorously on the ground, as, alternately they advanced towards an receded from the audience, the members of which kept time by the clashing of boomerangs and the monotonous but regular thud-thud of shields striking the ground.

As a general rule, it is only the men who are decorated for these dances, but there are certain of them which are performed by women. The decoration of the bodies of the latter during one of these was quite unlike that seen at any time on the men. In the first place, there was no helmet.

48 Roth, "Ethnological Studies," etc., p. 117.

The Arunta

Each woman had a broad, white band of down across her forehead – in this case obtained from the rabbit, which has recently invaded the central area.⁴⁹ The white fur on its tail is much appreciated by the natives for decorative purposes. Each woman wore also a long string, made out of the same material, hanging pendant from the head-band over the shoulders on each side. Altogether the decorations of the women shown in the photograph must have represented the tail tips of several hundred rabbits (Fig. 233). Every performer had a double continuous band of plant down running across the forehead and over the bridge of the nose. The other decorations consisted of lines of the same, the design varying to a certain extent on the different performers. In all there was a series running from the top of the shoulder on to the breast. Other lines ran between these from side to side across the chest. On the upper part of the abdomen there was an isolated design which usually had the form of an oblong with one or more lines running horizontally across it. In one case the design had the form of a horse-shoe, and in the other of an inverted T. On each thigh there was drawn an elongate ellipse.

There is a very considerable variety in the decorations associated with different corroborees, but those here and previously described will serve as typical examples.

3 – Decoration During Sacred Ceremonies or *Quabara Undattha*.

The characteristic feature of the decorations in all sacred ceremonies is that in them birds' down, which the natives call

⁴⁹ There were no rabbits in Central Australia when first I traversed it in 1893 and latter again en 1895, 1896 and 1897. In 1901 they had made their appearance and were spreading rapidly. In 1923 they were present in thousands and, to judge by the results of collecting, had almost completely exterminated not only the smaller marsupials, such as the rabbit-bandicoot, but also their rodent allies the jerboa rats. In 1896 and 1901 the latter were abundant, even a nuisance to the collector, because the natives caught them so easily, but twenty years later scarcely one was to be had. To the settler the rabbit is a dire pest, to the native he is a godsend, both as an article of food and as a source of decorative material. His white tail tip has completely replaced that of the now unprocurable Peragale or Alpita.

The Arunta

undattha, is employed ; indeed, the importance of the feature may be gauged by the fact that these performances are commonly spoken of as *quabara undattha*, and such no woman or uninitiated youth is allowed to see, except on extremely rare occasions, and then only at a considerable distance and indistinctly.

In these ceremonies also only a limited number ever take part as actual performers and, instead of occupying a long time in their performance, they usually last only a few minutes. Unlike those of the ordinary dances, the design always has a definite significance, and is supposed in many cases to have been handed down from the Alchera, while in others the decorations have been shown to the owner of the *quabara* by the *lruntarinia*, or spirits. These ceremonies, again, are never passed on from tribe to tribe, but are in the possession of certain individuals, who have received them by right of inheritance – that is, they may be regarded as private property – and each one is, save those given by the *lruntarinia*, associated with some special man or woman of the Alchera. All of the men are connected with the totems.

The various forms of design may be seen by reference to the figures illustrating the Engwura. Almost always, as in the ordinary dances, special attention is paid to the head-dress. The hair is tied up, and a helmet is made out of twigs or grass stalks wound round with human hair-string. In the case of one of the emu performances (Fig. 96), it forms a tapering column about five feet in height, the end being ornamented with a tuft of emu feathers. Owing to the flexibility of the column, the end droops somewhat, and moves about as the performer walks, imitating well the continuous up-and-down movement of an emu's head while the bird walks aimlessly about. In these emu ceremonies the lines of down run along the length of the body, arms, and legs, a design which may perhaps have been suggested in the beginning by the very distinct longitudinal markings on the body of the young bird.

In the ceremonies of the frog totem there are two very characteristic styles of decoration : one consists of alternate circles of white and red down running round the head-dress, which sometimes forms a wide disc-like structure. The

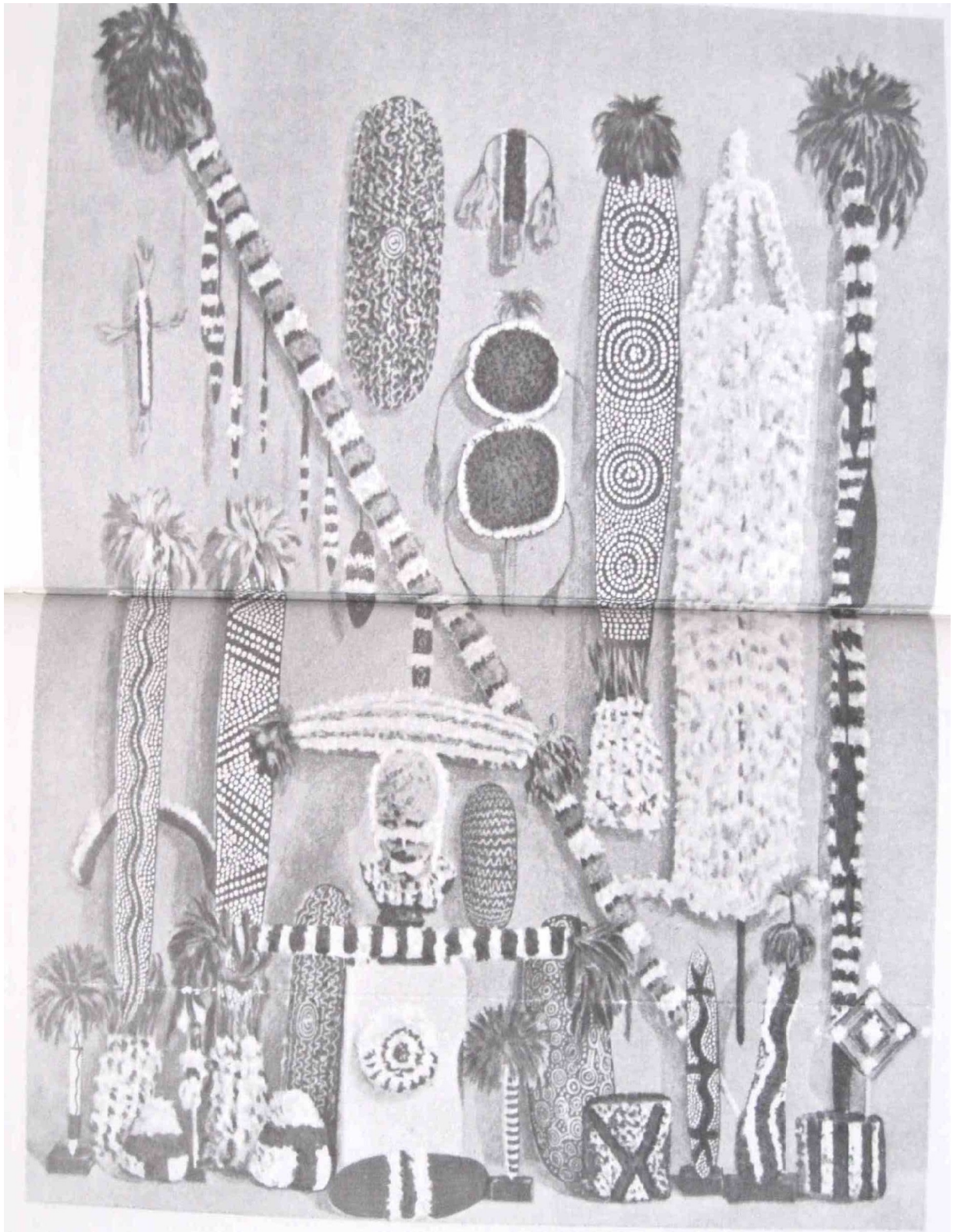
The Arunta

circles may be continued round the body and limbs, broken by perhaps a few longitudinal lines. Another form frequently met with in this totem consists of small patches of red, each of which is surrounded by a circle of white down. The head-dress, with the Churinga which is fixed into it, and is also decorated with alternate circles of red and white, represents a large tree; the longitudinal lines indicate roots, and the smaller circular patches represent frogs. This is indicative of the fact that, as is very characteristic of frog like in Central Australia, the animals spend the dry season, or in some cases the day-time, burrowing in the sandy ground amongst the roots of the red gums which grow in the beds and along the banks of the creeks, which latter, it must be remembered, only contain water at rare intervals of times (Fig. 98).

Reference to the illustrations concerned with the account of the Engwura will serve to indicate the elaborate nature of some of the decorations, and, as we have said before, while it takes, as in this particular instance, between five and six hours to decorate the performer, the ceremony itself lasts only a few minutes. In most of them, specially decorated objects are used, some of the more typical and important of which are represented in Plate I.

In a large number of them a *Nurtunja* is used (Figs. 77, 78 86, 91). In certain others we meet with an equally important object, which is called a *Waninga* (Figs. 61, 81). The *Nurtunja* is typical of the northern, and the *Waninga* of the southern, part of the Arunta tribe. There are various forms of the figures illustrating the Engwura ceremony. The most usual form is made of from one to twenty spears; round these, first of all, long grass stalks are bound by means of the hair-girdles of the men, and then rings of down are added, and perhaps, but not always, a few Churinga will be suspended at intervals. The top is almost always decorated with a large tuft of eagle-hawk feathers. More rarely the down, instead of being in rings, will be fixed on in long lines running parallel to the length of the *Nurtunja*, or, as in one case, there may be rings at intervals, and between these there will be longitudinal lines of down. Occasionally from the top end of a large *Nurtunja* a

The Arunta



The Arunta

PLATE I : CEREMONIAL OBJECTS.

1 – 2 – 3	Ceremonial tablets used during the performance of a Rain ceremony. Arunta tribe.
4	Object worn in the head-dress of a man performing a ceremony of the Yam totem. Tjingilli tribe.
5 – 6	Two head-dresses worn during the performance of a Tjudia (deaf adder) totemic ceremony Warramunga tribe.
7	Head-dress worn during the performance of a ceremony of the wind totem. Warramunga tribe.
8 – 9	Head-dress worn during totemic ceremonies. Anula tribe.
10	Object representing a white cockatoo, worn during a totemic ceremony. Tjingilli.
11	Object representing a white cockatoo, carried by the head man of the totem when performing intichiuma. Warramunga tribe.
12	Object representing the limp body of a dead kangaroo, worn on the head-dress during a kangaroo ceremony. Arunta tribe.
13	Wooden slab worn on the head during the performance of a ceremony of the snake totem. Anula tribe.
14	Black cockatoo tail feathers ornamented with down, worn on the head during the performance of a rain ceremony. Arunta tribe.
15 – 16 – 17 – 18	Decorated shields used during the performance of ceremonies connected with the witchetty grub totem. Arunta tribe.
19	Shield used during the performance of a rain ceremony. Arunta tribe.
20	Nurtunja used during the performance of an Achilpa ("Wild cat") totemic ceremony, with Churinga attached. Arunta tribe.
21	Nurtunja used during the performance of a kangaroo ceremony, with Curinga attached.
22	Small Nurtunja worn on the head during the performance of a "plum tree" totemic ceremony. Arunta tribe.
23	Small Nurtunja worn on the head during the performance of a Hakea plant totemic ceremony. Arunta tribe.
24	Object representing the sun, carried during the performance of a sun totemic ceremony. Arunta tribe.
25	Waninga used during the performance of a kangaroo totemic ceremony. Arunta tribe.
26	Small Waninga worn in the head-dress during the performance of a kangaroo totemic ceremony. Arunta tribe.

The Arunta

small second one will hang pendent (Fig. 91) ; at other times the *Nurtunja* may be in the form of a cross, or it may be T-shaped. At times, again, it may have the appearance of a torpedo resting on the head, or, finally, it may be in the form of a huge helmet firmly attached to the head, and of various shapes, according to what it is supposed to represent. This form (Fig. 82) differs from all the others in the fact that one end of the *Nurtunja* is actually continuous with the head-dress, instead of being, as in all other cases, a structure independent of the head-dress and affixed after the completion of this.

The *Waninga*, like the *Nurtunja*, varies much in shape and size ; some are so small that they can easily be worn in the head-dress. The fundamental point in the structure of the *Waninga* is that it consists of a main vertical support, which may be merely a stick but little more than a foot in length, or, as is more usually the case, a long spear, across which is fixed a shorter arm or two arms. According to whether there be one or more of the shorter transverse arms we can distinguish two main types. The first has the form of a cross, so far as supporting structures are concerned, and fur string passes diagonally across the spaces between the central and cross bars, with the result that a lozenge-shaped plate of strands of fur string, placed closely side by side, is formed (Pl. I, Fig. 26). In the second type the strands of string run from one cross bar to the other, parallel to the length of the spear, and as one of the cross bars is placed close to either end of the spear, there is formed a long oblong-shaped structure, at each end of which the strands of string pass diagonally across to the central spear at a very obtuse angle. At the upper end there may be a third, and in this case short, transverse bar, close to the tip of the spear, and strands of string, as in the one shown in Pl. I, Fig. 25, may pass to this from the upper of the two large cross bars. When this is so, the *Waninga* is really a double one, the small upper part representing a small one placed at the top of the main larger one in much the same way as, in certain of the *Nurtunjas*, we have seen a small one attached to the large one, only that, in the case of the *Waninga*, owing to its form, the connection between the two is of necessity more intimate.

The Arunta

The fur-string is apparently always of more than one description, part of it being made of opossum and part often of bandicoot fur, while in the larger ones human hair-string is employed as well. By means of these different coloured strings a definite design can be produced ; for example, in one of the smaller ones, the central space is made with red-ochre opossum string, the outer part consisting of grey bandicoot string ; in another the central part is red then follows a band of grey, and then, on the outside, another band of red. In the larger ones bands of red, black, and grey alternate in various ways, the exact pattern being always definitely determined by tradition. Especially in the case of the larger ones, the surface formed by the string may be further ornamented with white down, which in some cases may be laid on so thickly as almost to hide the string from view.

So far as both *Nurtunja* and *Waninga* are concerned, we are dealing with objects of a sacred nature, the origin of which it is impossible to conjecture. The mere form apparently means nothing – that is, we may find in two perfectly distinct ceremonies that two *Nurtunjas* or two *Waningas* are used which are, respectively, quite identical in form, and yet one of the *Nurtunjas* will represent a kangaroo, and the other a wild cat. The part of one *Waninga* which represents in one ceremony a head of a kangaroo may, in another, represent the tail of a lizard. All that can be said in regard to these two characteristic objects is that in whatever ceremony either of them be used, then, for the time being, it represents the animal or plant which gives its name to the totem with which the ceremony is concerned. In a kangaroo ceremony, a *Waninga* or *Nurtunja* means a kangaroo, in an emu ceremony it means an emu. The decoration is, so far as can be seen, perfectly arbitrary, and has at the present day no significance, in the sense of its being intended to have any special resemblance to the object which the *Nurtunja* or *Waninga* is supposed represented.

Very often in connection with the sacred ceremonies different objects such as shields and *pitchis* are used. They are always more or less decorated, and for the time being are regarded as Churinga or sacred. The four decorated shields represented in Plate I, Figs. 15, 16, 17, and 18 were used

The Arunta

during ceremonies connected with the witchetty grub totem. First of all the whole surface is rubbed over with fresh red ochre, and then the designs are added, taking the form, as seen in the figures, sometimes of wavy or zigzag lines, at others of larger and smaller series of concentric circles. Then by way of further ornamentation, dots of down may be added. In the upper and lower left-hand ones the central series of concentric circles represents the bush on which the grub feeds, the wavy lines indicating its tracks. In the lower one on the right side the larger series of circles are supposed to represent the same bush, and the smaller ones the Udnirringa bush, on which the mature insect lays its eggs, while on the smaller shield the zigzag lines again represent the tracks of the insect.

The little *pitchi* shown in Fig. 17 was used during a rain ceremony in the southern Arunta. In the Alchera a great ancestor, named Irria, took lumps of gypsum out of his body and presented them to another man in order to enable the latter to cause rain to fall, and this represented the *pitchi* in which the gypsum was carried. It was coated over with red ochre, and then further decorated with a broad media, band of red and an outer narrower band of white down.

4 – Designs on Churinga

The designs on Churinga are of three forms : (1) incised patterns, (2) painted patterns, and (3) decorations of down. The last of these is usually only added during the performance of sacred ceremonies in connection with which the Churinga are used, though occasionally, as in the case of the curious ones represented in Fig. 39, the down may be present quite irrespective of their being used in a ceremony.

It is very customary to cover, more especially the wooden Churinga, with a coating of red ochre, which is renewed from time to time when the *Pertalchera* is visited or the objects are brought into camp for ceremonial purposes. In addition to this, a definite pattern is sometimes painted on them, but it is always of a simple character. We have previously described a series of stone Churinga of the Unjiamba totem in the Arunta tribe, each of which is ornamented with a series of alternate

The Arunta

lines of red and white drawn transversely to the length of the Churinga.

The third series of patterns consists of incised lines of various forms, usually drawn with the incisor tooth of an opossum implanted in the lower jaw. We have already described the meaning of a series of these figures which will serve as typical examples, and will only repeat here that the nature of the design gives at most very little and usually no clue whatever to its meaning, and that if the designs were imitative in their origin, they have become so modified in course of time that every vestige of anything in the least resembling the natural object supposed to be represented by the design has vanished. On one Churinga a series of concentric circles are a spiral will represent a man, on another a frog, on another a tree, and on another a water-hole. It is true that now and again a sinuous band will represent a snake, but, on the other hand, fundamentally the same occurs on a crane Churinga, or again on one of the witchetty grub totem, on which it represented the track of the grub ancestor (Fig. 244). The same wavy line is very often drawn on various objects and implements, such as shields and slabs of wood worn on the head during dances, when it is purely decorative and has no meaning.

The incised designs on the Churinga may be reduced to a few fundamental forms : (1) slight chippings arranged in more or less regular lines, (2) straight or slightly curved bands of lines, (3) wavy bands of lines, (4) curved, U-shaped bands, (5) spiral bands, (6) concentric circles, (7) squares derived from concentric circles, (8) combinations of circles or squares with straight lines, (9) clearly imitative designs confined apparently to the representation of the tracks of birds or other animals.

Examples of the first are seen in the Churinga represented in Figs. 234 and 235. the first of these is the *Churinga Knanja* of an Arunta man named Ulperinia, belonging to the emu totem, the other being that of a Kumara woman of the same tribe named Ilpa-yimbika, who belongs to the Latjia (a yam) totem. To a certain extent the chippings are arranged in rows following roughly the length of the object, and may be associated with straight or curved bands, circles, and spirals.



The Arunta

The straight or slightly curved bands are represented Figs. 236, and 238. In Fig. 242 a somewhat unusual form of decoration is met with in which, in addition to a series of odd bands running transversely half-way across the surface, there are four ovals, the spaces within which are filled with incised lines. In Fig. 236 we have a stone Churinga from the Warramunga tribe, flattened and pear-shaped in outline, with its narrower end tipped with resin. A somewhat roughly cut band of lines follows the outline all the way round, about half an inch from the margin. Five bands run across the flat surface touching the curved one at either end, and other shorter ones run at right angles to the latter, radiating towards the edge, but not passing round it. In Fig. 237 a Churinga associated with the rain totem in the Arunta tribe is represented. The lines are much more carefully incised than in the case of the last one – the central, slightly curved band represents a creek, and the straight short bands along the side indicate the marchings of the ancestors from one spot to another along the banks of the creek. The concentric circles represent places where the men sat down, and the curved open **U**-shaped lines the men sitting down. In another we have a good example of a style of decoration which is usually met with on Churinga belonging to the frog totem in the Arunta tribe. The special one, however, is the *Churinga knanja* of Kumara woman named Litchi-litchi, belonging to the yam totem (Fig. 238). It is made of wood, and on the convex side there are a number of circles connected together by straight or slightly curved bands. The design on a Churinga of the frog totem indicates trees and tracks and sometimes frogs and their legs, but in a yam totem it may indicate yams and the roots from which they grow, or individuals and their tracks. In just the same way identical designs on the Churinga of an Irriakura man represent the plant and its roots.

Wavy bands are very usually regarded as indicative of snakes, but it is not at all safe to arrive at this conclusion in the absence of definitive information. Such wavy bands are seen on several of the Churinga figured. In the wooden Churinga belonging to an Arunta man of the Udnirringita totem in the McDonnell Ranges, the long wavy bands represent the

The Arunta

wanderings of the old ancestors in the Alchera. Still more irregular wavy bands are seen in the figure representing a stone Churinga of an Arunta man belonging to the Irritcha (eagle-hawk) totem.

Curved **U**-shaped bands are very often met with. A design of this kind is usually supposed to represent a group of individuals sitting down together. It is just possible that to a certain extent this may be imitative in origin, the two limbs of the **U** representing the outstretched legs of the men sitting on the ground. Even under ordinary circumstances it is not unusual for a native to represent a seated man in this way. Thus, for example, we were, one day, listening to an account which was being given to us by an old man, describing how an original Purula man split into two. The old man who was speaking to us, repeatedly, as natives are in the habit of doing, illustrated his remarks with drawings made on the sandy soil. When he was speaking of the original Purula man, he represented him by a **U** drawn on the ground with the tip of his finger. When, according to the tradition, he split into two, this was represented thus, **UU**. When the two men sat down closely, as natives do during ceremonies, in such a way that the back of one man was close to the front of the other,  he represented it thus . On some Churinga this particular design has the form of a number of **U** fitting into one another – as, for example, on the water Churinga seen in Fig. 237, in which it is repeated several times, indicating on each occasion groups of people sitting down by the side of a creek. On other Churinga the design has become modified, so that there is an outer **U** and a series of lines parallel to the two arms, filling up the space within them (Figs. 243, 244). The main design in Fig., though it has at first sight the form of two of these **U**-shaped structures on a large scale, is quite possibly derived from an original spiral or series of concentric circles which, for some reason, have been divided into two, and an irregular band of straight lines interposed between the two halves. In the upper of the two divisions there is the clear commencement of a spiral in the centre. This particular Churinga belonged to a man of the Yarumpa (honey-ant) totem in the Western McDonnell Ranges.

The Arunta

In many instances the design commences as a spiral and is completed as a series of concentric circles, and it can hardly be doubted that the latter has been originally derived from the former. The concentric circles vary to a very considerable extent. In some cases they may be very numerous, and drawn with wonderful precision, considering the fact that they are incised on stone with the aid of so primitive a tool as a tooth.

In somewhat rare cases the circles may become flattened out so as to give rise finally to groups of groups of concentric squares. In the Churinga shown in Fig. 240 this gradual angulation of the circles, so as to give rise to squares, is evident, but in the case of the bell-bird Churinga (Fig. 241), both well-developed circles and squares occur on the same object. The first of these two Churinga belonged to a man named Mulla-mulla, of a sand-hill rat totem, and both of them lived in the western section of the Arunta tribe. This is of some interest, as, further still to the west, the characteristic ornament of the natives consists of concentric rectangles and zigzag lines such as could be derived from the breaking up of the former. The circles on the Arunta Churinga certainly preceded, in point of time, the squares, and it is quite possible that the present very characteristic designs of West Australian implements, with the rectangular patterns and zigzag lines may have been derived long ago from a scheme of ornamentation such as is now met with amongst the Arunta. The concentric circles so characteristic of designs on all forms of objects in Central Australia are never met with in the far west, where squares and zig-zags prevail.

In some cases, instead of these being a simple spiral or series of circles, the central part may be occupied by an oval or a rough circle, or an irregular square (Fig. 241), enclosing two or more straight lines. This is seen in the Churinga belonging to a man on the wren totem.

Finally, on some Churinga there are to be seen the tracks of animals. As a general rule, tracks are represented by groups of straight or curved lines of various lengths, which can scarcely be called imitative, but now and again, and more especially on Churinga associated with bird totems, marks clearly imitative

The Arunta

old tracks are seen. Thus, for example, on the Churinga belonging to Ulperinia, a man of the emu totem, there is just one single emu track represented (Fig. 234). The only example of any except a bird's track being actually imitated on the Churinga is seen in the one represented in Fig. 240. This is the *Churinga knanja* of a man who belonged to the sand-hill rat totem. The characteristic track made by the long and short toes on the hind foot of the animal as it hops along is represented, the tracks passing first up one side, then round the end and down the other side. This Churinga is a very old one, and at the upper end the tracks have become almost obliterated by constant rubbing with grease and red ochre.

5 – Rock and Ground Drawings.

The rock drawings may be divided into two distinct series (a) those which may be spoken of as ordinary rock drawings and (b) certain others, in many cases not distinguishable from of the first series, so far as their form is concerned, but which belong to a class of designs called *Churinga Ilpintira* or *Churinga ilkinia*, and are regarded as sacred because they are associated with the totems. Each local totemic group has certain of these belonging especially to the group, and in very many cases preserved on rock surfaces in spots which are strictly tabu to the women, children, and uninitiated men.

If we were dealing with the various drawings simply from the point of view of decorative art, we could divide the whole series into two more or less distinct groups. The first of these would contain those that are zoomorphic or phytomorphic in form and origin, and the second those that may be called geometric in form. In both series we find examples of the two groups just described, but in these case of the second series – that is, the sacred drawings – the geometrical ones greatly preponderate. We will deal first with the ordinary drawings. Amongst these the zoomorphic and phytomorphic designs are similar to those that are found in many parts of the continent, and represent, often in very rude form, outlines of animals and

The Arunta

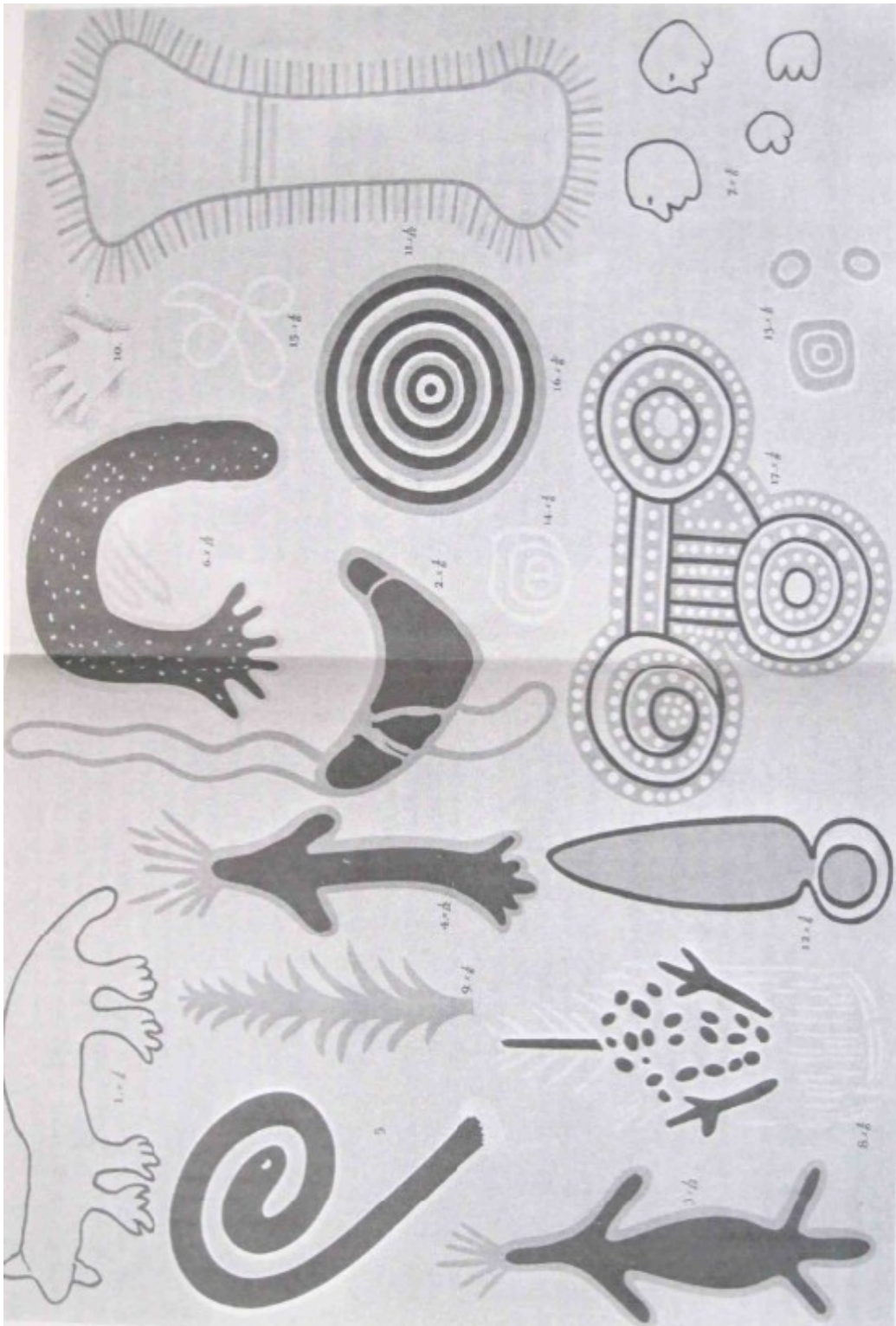


Plate II : Native Rock Painting

The Arunta

plants ; they are, indeed, sometimes so rudely executed, that whilst their zoomorphic or phytomorphic nature is evident, it is yet wholly impossible to tell the animal or plant from which the artist has drawn his inspiration.⁵⁰ Those represented in Plate II will serve to give a good idea of the nature of these drawings, and there is practically but little variation in them from place to place. The majority of those represented exist on the roofs and walls of shadows caves lying around the base of Ayers Rock far out in the desert region away to the south of Lake Amadeus.⁵¹ The materials used are red and yellow ochre, charcoal, and some white material such as kaolin or calcined gypsum.

Number 1 represents most probably a dingo, and is drawn merely in outline in charcoal ; Number 2 is evidently a somewhat conventionalised drawing of a bird with a long tail ; the whole is outlined in red ochre and the body and head are drawn solid with charcoal ; the tail is of some length, and what are evidently the legs are joined together for some reason ; the meaning of the red bands crossing the body is difficult to see. Numbers 3 and 4 represent conventional drawings of lizards. Number 5 is not frequently met with in various parts of Australia, and represents a snake coming out of a hole in the rock, a natural hole being often utilised for the purpose. Number 6 is probably zoomorphic in origin, but so conventionalised that it is perfectly impossible to say what it represents. Number 7 is evidently a series of human heads drawn in outline with charcoal ; they are placed in a group close to one another, and, were it not for the fact that the lower ones are included in the same group as the two upper ones, it would be difficult to suggest what they were intended for. Number 8 is a more complicated drawing, and shows considerable originality on the part of the artist. It is painted on an exposed rock surface at the base of the George Gill Range, and a native described it to us as an attempt to

50 The zoomorphs are very crude as compared with the really artistic drawings of animals of all kinds met with in the far north on the Alligator Rivers.

51 The figures are copied from drawings made by one of the authors during the Horn Expedition to Central Australia in 1894, and have been already described by Dr. Stirling. "Report of the Horn Expedition," Pt. IV.

The Arunta

represent, as if seen from below, an emu sitting on its eggs. The neck is a stout black line edged with white, the legs are also black and end in the characteristic toes ; the eggs are black oval patches each enclosed in a white line, and the feathers are indicated with white lines. Number 9 represents the front of a Cycad, which grows in fair abundance on certain of the Rocky Ranges, though there are none within eighty miles of Ayers Rock. So far as we have seen, this is the only example of a phytomorphic drawing.

Number 10 is drawn in a different way from all the others, but in one which is practised by the natives all over the continent. The method consists in placing the hand flat up against the rock and then blowing over it from the mouth fine dust of red ochre or charcoal, which remains attached to the rock, and so the outline of the hand is stencilled in red or black as the case may be.

In addition to drawing such as those described, there are others which are not geometrical and may in all probability be regarded as zoomorphic in origin, though the resemblance to the animal is but faintly if at all discernible, and the artist has further embellished his work with lines which make it still more difficult to trace the origin of the design. Such an one is represented in Number 11, which is copied from a drawing at Ayers Rock. The main outline is probably the modified form of the body of an animal such as is drawn in Number 3 ; the part which, if this be so, represents the head almost merges into the blunt prominences which indicate the front limbs, while the two hind ones are only indicated by the swellings at the opposite end. The alternative lines of red and yellow ochre which radiate from the whole surface are evidently intended as an embellishment to the design, and may be regarded as a further development of the radiating lines which occur only at the head end of the body of the lizard represented in Number 3. It may be added that both drawings occur close together at Ayers Rock.

Number 12 is of a different nature, and represents apparently one of the stone knives with a resin half such as is used by the natives, though the attachment of the blade to the half is somewhat different from that of the real object. There

The Arunta

can be, however, little doubt as to what the drawing is meant to represent.

One thing may be noticed with regard to these rock drawings, and that is, that we do not meet in the Arunta tribe with any of the more complicated ones depicting scenes such as a kangaroo chase, or men spearing emus, or a corroboree dance, such as are found amongst other tribes in the south and east parts of the continent, though the Central Australian is by no means, in art matters, inferior to the coastal tribes ; nor again, it may be stated here, do we meet with any attempt to sculpture the outlines of animals or plants on the rock surface.

Passing now to the geometrical designs, it may be noted that, so far as their form, and indeed that of some of the zoomorphic and phytomorphic drawings, is concerned, there is no distinction between them and certain of the drawings associated with ceremonial objects. They are dealt with separated because, as we have said, the latter have definite associations in regard to the totems, and have what the ordinary geometrical rock-drawings do not appear to have, a definite significance. By this we mean that the artist who drew them had no definite purpose in doing so. The natives, when asked the meaning of certain drawings such as these, will constantly answer that they are only play-work and mean nothing ; but, on the other hand, what are exactly, so far as their form is concerned, similar drawings, only drawn on some ceremonial object or in a particular spot, have a very definite meaning. That is, the same native will tell you that a special drawing in one spot has no meaning, and yet he will tell you exactly what it is supposed to signify when drawn in a different place. The latter, it may be remarked, is always on what we may call sacred ground, near to which the women may not come. It can scarcely be doubted that these ordinary and, in form, geometrical rock-paintings which are drawn in his spare time by a man who is frequently seeing and using objects marked with the sacred symbols, are due to his remembrance of the latter. He is making a drawing the inspiration of which is, in reality, a totemic design, though, as it is not drawn upon a sacred spot or on a ceremonial object, it does not "mean" anything.

In speaking of these as geometrical designs, we use the

The Arunta

term only in reference to the present form of the design, and not at all as implying that they are merely geometrical figures. All the sacred drawings, the greater number of which are geometric in nature, are associated with the totems, and to the natives each one has a definite significance, though, of two identical designs, one will signify to a native of a gum tree totem a gum tree and, to a native of a fly totem, a fly.

A few of the ordinary rock-drawings of this form are represented (Numbers 13-17), which will serve to indicate their general nature. It will be noticed that in many of them the concentric circle pattern is conspicuous. In regard to this there is good ground for the belief that the concentric circle pattern, which figures so largely on the various ceremonial objects of the Central Australian native, has been derived from an original spiral. A glance at the totemic designs will show clearly what we mean by saying that the idea of particular drawings, such as some of those represented in Fig. 124, was derived from the former, though, in regard to them, the natives assure us that they have no definite significance.

The name *Churinga ilpintira* is given to special drawings usually made on rocks, but sometimes on the ground. Each totem has one or more of these especially associated with it, and, according to the Achilpa tradition, they were originally designed by Numbakulla, who drew these at various places that he determined upon as local centres for the totem groups. Those on rocks are permanent, and are always drawn in close proximity to the *Pertalchera* or sacred storehouse, so that they are never seen by women and children. Good examples of these are shown in Fig. 6 and 7 on Plate II, which are supposed to have been drawn in the Alchera at Underga, and are associated with the Udnirringita totem.

In some cases, but not often, the *Ilpintira* is drawn on the ground, as was the original one made by Numbakulla. A good example of one of these is seen in Fig. 49, belonging to the emu totem. The ground is smoothed down over a space about two yards in diameter and damped so as to form a firmer surface, and the design drawn as already described. In this case it is, though crude, decidedly imitative of parts of the bird and of its eggs in various stages.

The Arunta

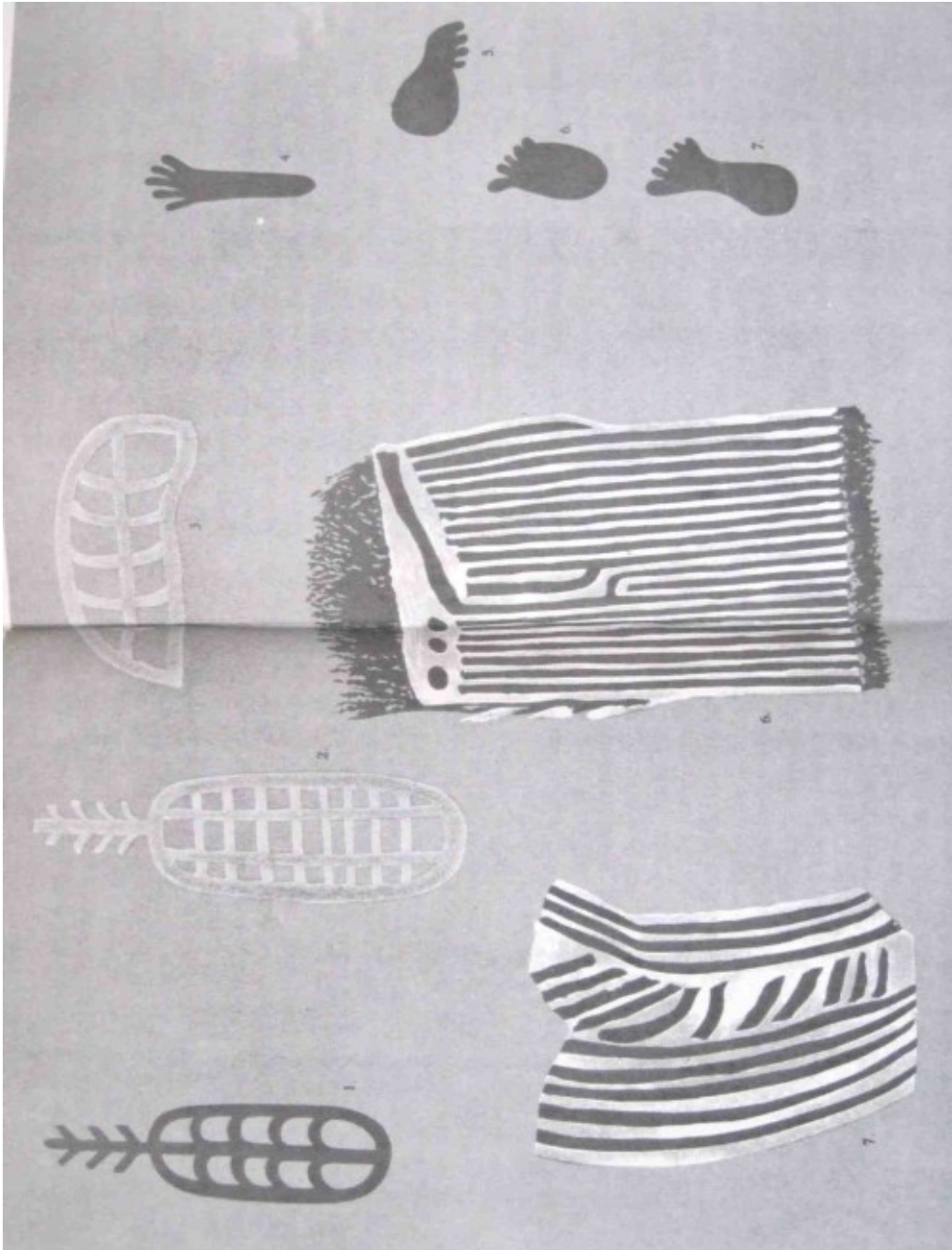


Plate III : *Churinga Ilkinia of the Udnirringita Totem drawn on the Rocks at the Emily Gorge.*

1 and 2 represent Centipedes. 3 represents a Witchetty Grub in the Chrysalis Stage. 4 represents the Hand and Arm of an Alchera Woman Leaning against the Rock. 5, 6 and 7 represent Tracks of Alchera Women. In 6 the Line slanting towards the Right represents a Woman Looking upwards. The three Circles represent Eggs of the Udnirringita. In 7 The central Slanting Lines represent shoulders of Achera Ancestors.

The Arunta

Ground drawings are made by all the central tribes in connection with certain totemic ceremonies. The most elaborate are those of the Warramunga tribe, illustrations of three of which, used in connection with the Wollunqua Snake ceremonies, are represented in order to give some idea of this aspect of native art. In Fig. 245, three natives are shown preparing one. The ground has been carefully levelled and smoothed down. Charcoal mixed with grease has been rubbed on with the finger to form concentric circles representing various objects, such as trees and water-holes, referred to in the tradition of the Wollunqua. These are outlined with dots of white pipeclay, with which the whole surface of the ground surrounding them is covered, giving rise, finally, to an elaborate drawing such as that seen in Fig. 247, which measures fifteen feet in length, the long sinuous band representing the Wollunqua snake. The figure shows also the design on the bodies of ten men who are squatting on the ground, bending over the drawing, after having performed the ceremony. Fig. 246 represents a special and very elaborate form of ground drawing in the form of a long keel-shaped mound, on each side of which is the drawing of a snake, completely outlined and enclosed with dots of white pipeclay.

In connection with the Engwura (Fig. 110), an illustration is given showing the blacks of a group of the younger men who had just passed through the concluding ceremony and on whom were painted various totem designs. Other sacred drawings, but on a smaller scale, are called *Churinga ilkinia*, and are drawn on the bodies of the men when they perform sacred ceremonies such as *Mbanbiuma*. A characteristic one of the Udnirringita, for example, consists of a medium line of red down the middle of the face, with white on the cheeks, vertical bands of red and white on the chest. One of the *Ilkinia* of the Irriakura totem consists of six or eight wavy lines of pipeclay on the forehead, and those of the Achilpa of vertical white lines.

In addition to the *Ilpintira* and *Ilkinia*, other drawings are made on the rocks, some of them supposed to represent objects associated with the totems, others having nothing to do with them, such, for example, as the two centipedes (Plates III, 1 and 2)

The Arunta

at Emily Gap or the two pointing-sticks (Fig. IV, 1 et 2) at Quiurnpa. Since, however, there are drawn on the rocks at a sacred spot, they are regarded as sacred or Churinga. Danger of making any definite statement as to the origin of any particular design can be seen from the fact that, of the drawing 2 and 4, which are fundamentally similar, one represents a poison stick, the other a plum tree. The drawings on Plates III and IV are characteristic of this aspect of native art.

The former are painted on the precipitous rocky sides of the Emily Gap and the latter on what is called the Pirkintilia rock at Quiurnpa, a spot which is especially associated in tradition with the *Ulpmerka* men. In both cases we have drawings some of which, such as Plate III, Numbers 1 – 7 amongst the Udnirringita, and Numbers 2 and 14 amongst the *Ulpmerka* ones, are clearly zoomorphic or phytomorphic in origin. Two larger drawings of the Udnirringita the curved band of bars near to the centre is supposed to represent the shoulders of some of the Alchera ancestors, and in the other one the space between two of the white lines which slant off towards the right hand is supposed to represent an Alchera woman, with her hand up to her head, peering upwards as she watches Intwailiuka, one of the great leaders of the men in the Alchera, performing the ceremony of *Intichiuma*.

Of the *Ulpmerka* designs, several of them, such as Plate IV Numbers 3 – 8, etc., are those which are painted on boys at the ceremony of throwing them up, the first of the initiation ceremonies. Others, such as Numbers 18 and 20, represent the *Nurtunja* which Kukaitcha, the leader of the *Ulpmerka*, carried on his head ; Number 14 represents a plum tree and Number 16 is supposed to be an unripe plum. The explanation of the figures is the one given by the natives at the present day. In the case of these, as in that of the sacred drawings of all other totems, it is not possible to find out anything with regard to their origin. They are supposed to have been handed down from the times of the Alchera ancestors, and a knowledge of what they indicate is handed on from generation to generation, but no one has any idea of how this particular meaning came to be attached to them.

Plate IV : *Churinga Ilkinia of the Ulpmerka of the Plum Tree Totem, drawn on the Rock at Quiurnpa*

The Arunta



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| 1, 2, | Ilvinga of Poison Bones and Sticks made by the Akumburinga Of the Ulpmerka | | |
| 3 – 8 | Drawings for painting on the breasts of the Boys during the Ceremony of Throwing them up in the Air. | | |
| 9 | Drawing for the stomach during the same. | 19 | Ripe and Unripe Plums. |
| 10 | A plum tree, painted on the Back during the same. | 20 | Nurtunja of Kukaitcha. |
| 11, 13, | Drawings for the Back and Stomach during the Same. | 21 | Nurtunja of Ulpmerka Men. |
| 14 | Plum Tree. | 22 | Head Nurtunja of Kukaitcha. |
| 15 | Drawing for the Back. | 23 | A Large Nurtunja and Poison Bone of Kukaitcha. |
| 16 | An unripe Plum. | 24 | Meaning not Known. |
| 17 | Drawing for the Back. | 25 | Head Nurtunja of Kukaitcha. |
| 18 | The Head Nurtunja of Kukaitcha. | 26 | Drawing for the Breast. |