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ORDINARY MEETING, JANUARY 16, 1888.

D. HOWARD, ESQ., F.C.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following Elections were announced :—

LIFE MEMBER.—Principal T. G. Rooke, B.A., Rawdon College.

MEMBER.—Rev. J. Macarthur, M.A., London.

ASSOCIATES.—W. L. Courtney, Esq., M.A., LL.D., Fellow and Tutor New Coll., Oxford ; W. Keiller, Esq., Wimbledon Park ; W. I. Palmer, Esq., J.P., Reading ; Joseph John Murphy, Esq., Belfast.

The following paper was then read by Mr. H. Cadman Jones in the absence of the author, who is now resident in Australia.

THE ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA : THEIR ETHNIC POSITION AND RELATIONS. By JOHN FRASER, B.A., LL.D., F.R.S. of New South Wales.

THE aborigines of Australia present a wide and interesting field for ethnographical study. The field is as yet to a large extent unexamined and unexplored ; for, although there are some books specially written about our aborigines, their customs and language, and although many of our older colonists can tell much about their habits, yet the subject has scarcely attained to the dignity of a scientific study. I purpose to-night to confine myself to a single department of this subject,—the position and relation which our aborigines hold to the rest of mankind ; and to take my arguments only from what I may be permitted to call the common religiousness of nations. And as I am a colonist on a visit to this country, and have not here opportunities and facilities for a complete treatment of my theme, I shall ask your permission to refer to and quote a portion of my past labours in this field, as published in vol. xvi. of the Journal of the Transactions of the Royal Society of New South Wales.

I have said that I mean to build my argument on the religious ideas and ceremonies which exist among our Australian aborigines, and the resemblance of these to similar institutions found among nations and tribes elsewhere. Now, of all the definitions which have been thought of as distinguishing man from the rest of creation, the one that describes him as the "religious animal" is perhaps the best. Some will say that man is the mechanical, the social, the omnivorous, and so on. The philologist will tell us that etymology declares him to be the "thinker." I grant that the power of consecutive thought is a noble gift to man, but I am ready to deny that it is his noblest possession. The religious instinct, however debasing the forms which it now assumes, seems to me a diviner gift; for, while it stimulates, it also chastens and regulates the force and direction of thought, and lays hold of and moulds man's inner nature in a way which mere intellect can never approach. I am further prepared to deny that religiousness is a thing of man's own invention, that mere thinking will ever lead a man to acts of worship, or that the progress and development of thought alone will bring him to more enlightened forms of worship. The tendency, as registered by history and observation, is all in the other direction,—towards degradation, not towards elevation; and if man were solely mental and emotional, his attitude in viewing the vastness, the energy and the multitude of the objects of nature around and above him would be one of awe and fear, not of worship. I therefore believe the manifestations of the religious sentiment among uncivilised nations such as the Australian aborigines, to be like ruins of an edifice, which neither they nor their ancestors ever built, but yet its very stones may tell something of its origin. Now, since man does not invent religious beliefs and practices for himself, we may justly argue that the presence of the same or similar ceremonies in nations at present widely separated in place indicates a common origin. The traditions of a great deluge, so similar everywhere, the folk-lore stories among so many nations, all tell the same tale,—a common origin. And, further, it is not an unreasonable thing to say that, as the human race was long ago split up into four great divisions, which we now call the Aryan, the Shemite, the Turanian, and the Hamite or Ethiopian, and which became antagonistic and locally distinct, so the primitive religion, with its beliefs and practices, would tend in four diverging directions, each portion, however, being homogeneous in itself, although retaining some features of resemblance to its brethren. Now, in speaking to you about our aborigines, I

have to do with the Ethiopian or black race, and if I can show you that the Australian beliefs are closely like those of the black race in other parts of the world, and yet in some respects similar to those of all mankind, I think I can then, without presumption, ask you to agree with me in saying that Lenormant and others must be wrong when they cut off the Australians from the record in the tenth chapter of Genesis, and thus from all connection with the sons of Noah.

My present task, therefore, is to show that the black tribes of Australia are connected with the rest of mankind, and especially with the black race in Africa. But, before I attempt to do so, you may consider it my duty to establish an antecedent probability, or, at least, possibility, that the blacks of Africa and the blacks of Australia are akin; this will carry me back to some of the earliest periods of human history.

The Chaldæan tablets recently deciphered speak of a dark race as existing in the plains of Babylonia from the earliest times, and along with it a light-coloured race.* This dark race I take to be the Kushites; they seem to have been the first occupiers of these regions, and had become so powerful that their empire reached from the Mediterranean to the Ganges, and from the Indian Ocean northwards to the plateau of Ararat. Other races, however, came down upon them from Central Asia, and, like a wedge, split them in two. Hence the position of this race is, in Genesis x., indicated ethnically by the names of Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan, which, geographically, are the countries we call Ethiopia, and Egypt, and Nubia, and Palestine. Their dominion had thus been thrown much to the west of their original seats, and had lodged itself in Africa, now their stronghold; but the other half of their old empire existed still, although much broken, for the later Greek tradition, in the *Odyssey* i., 23, 24, speaks of an eastern as well as a western nation of Ethiopians. Leaving the western Kushites to increase and multiply, and spread themselves into Central Africa, let us follow the fortunes of their eastern brethren. They are the pure Hamites of the dispersion, and long occupied the northern shores of the Persian Gulf and the plains of India. Meanwhile, a composite empire, called on the inscriptions the *Kiprat Arbat*, "the four quarters," had formed itself in Lower Babylonia. This Chaldæan monarchy—the first of the five great monarchies of ancient history—was overthrown by

* Even Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, found them there, for, on a cylinder, he speaks of "the black-headed race" as conquered and governed by him.

an irruption of Arab (Shemite) tribes about 1500 B.C. And now, as I think, a second wave of population began to move towards the shores of Australia, for these Arabs were pure monotheists, and in their religious zeal must have dashed to pieces the polytheistic and sensual fabric which the Babylonian conquests had upreared. Those portions of the Chaldæo-Babylonian people that were unable to escape from the dominion of the Arabs, were absorbed in the new empire. But the rupture of the Babylonian state and the proscription of its worship must have been so complete as to drive forth from their native seats many thousands of the people of the "four quarters or zones" and force them westwards into Africa or eastwards through the mountain passes into the table land of the Punjâb and thence into the Gangetic plains. Here, I imagine, were already located the earlier and purer Hamites, but finding them to be guilty of a skin not exactly coloured like their own, and not understanding their language, these later Kushites of mixed extraction regarded them as enemies and drove them forth into the mountains of the Deccan, where to this hour the Dravidians, and Kolarians, whom I consider their representatives, are black-skinned and savage races. Ere long these Babylonian Kushites were themselves displaced and ejected from the Ganges valley by a fair-skinned race, the Aryans, another and the last ethnic stream of invaders from the north-west. These Aryans, in religion and habits irreconcilably opposed to the earlier races of India, waged on them a relentless war. Hemmed up in the triangle of Southern India, the Hamites could escape only by sea; the later Kushites, on the other hand, could not seek safety in the mountains of the Deccan, as these were already occupied; they must, therefore, have been pushed down the Ganges into Further India and the Malayan peninsula; thence to pass at a later time into Borneo and the Sunda Islands and Papua, and afterwards across the sea of Timor into Australia, or eastwards into Melanesia, driven onwards now by the Turanian tribes which had come down from Central Asia into China and the peninsula and the islands of the East Indies.

Many known facts favour the view which I have thus taken of the successive waves of population which flowed over Indian soil towards Australia. I will mention two or three of these: (1) Ethnologists recognise two pre-Aryan races in India. The earlier had not attained to the use of metals, and had only polished flint axes and implements of stone; the later had no written records, and made grave-mounds over their dead. The Vedas call them "noseless," "gross feeders on

flesh," "raw eaters," "not sacrificing," "without gods," "without rites." All this suits our aboriginals; for they use stone axes; in several districts they make grave-mounds; the typical natives are "noseless," for they have very flat and depressed noses as contrasted with the straight and prominent noses of the Vedic Aryans; they have no gods and no religious rites such as the Vedas demand. (2) The Kolarian and Dravidian languages have inclusive and exclusive forms for the plural of the first person. So also have many of the languages of Melanesia and Polynesia. (3) The aborigines in the south and west of Australia use the same words for I, thou, we, you, as the natives of the Madras coasts of India.

Having thus shown from history and from the migration of nations that the aborigines of Australia, as to their remote descent, *may* be the brothers of the negroes in Africa, I now proceed to my proper theme, a comparison of the religious ceremonies and beliefs on both continents. We cannot expect to find set modes of worship or a formulated creed such as the possession of sacred books might secure, but we shall rather seek for analogies in the experiences and practices of their social and tribal life, for it is there that ancestral beliefs often stamp themselves permanently; a custom is there maintained from age to age, while those who practise it know not what it means or whence it came.

At present I confine myself to one tribal custom; our black fellows have a ceremony called the Bora, through which the young men pass when admitted into the tribe. This Bora exists everywhere throughout Australia, and is carried out everywhere much in the same fashion. I therefore conclude that it belongs to the whole race, and is an essential attribute of its existence. Now, if I may trust the accuracy of Hurd's *Rites and Ceremonies*, the negroes of Upper Guinea had, seventy years ago—long before ethnography became a science—certain religious mysteries singularly like those of the Bora, and I suppose they have them still.* These, like the Bora, are ceremonies of

* From W. Winwood Reade's book on *Savage Africa* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co.) I learn that similar ceremonies still exist in Equatorial Africa. He says: "Before they are permitted to wear clothes, marry, and rank in society as men and women, the young have to be initiated into certain mysteries. I received some information on this head from Moongilomba, after he had made me promise that I would not put it in my book. He told me that he was taken into a Fetich-house, stripped, severely flogged, and plastered with goat-dung, this ceremony, like those of Masonry, being conducted to the sound of music. Afterwards there came from behind a kind of screen or shrine uncouth and terrible sounds, such as he had never heard before. These, he was told, emanated from a spirit called Ukuk. He afterwards brought to me the instrument with which the fetich-man makes this

initiation, and not only bring a youth to a knowledge of his country's gods, but qualify him to commune with spirits and to hold civil power and authority in the state; all the uninitiated are to him a "profanum vulgus," who, on the least transgression of orders, are hurried away into the woods, there to be destroyed by the evil spirits which the magical power of the initiated can command and control. As an assembly of this kind is convened but four or five times in a century, and occupies a period of five years, only a small portion of the male population can acquire the qualification necessary for power in the state. The king issues, when he pleases, an order for the holding of this assembly. The preparations are committed to the care of those old men that are known to be best acquainted with the mysteries. These choose suitable places in the woods, and make ready there every appliance which can produce surprise, awe, and chilling fear on the minds of the novices. All women, children, and strangers are warned from the spot during the ceremonies, and the novice believes that, if he reveals any of the secrets of the grove, the spirits, knowing his faithlessness and profanity, will in some way or other bring destruction upon him. The country for some three or four miles around is sacred and inviolable, and the evil spirits will carry off those who intrude.

The essential idea prominent in the negro ceremony of initiation is that of death and a new birth, a regeneration. Hence the catechumen before he proceeds to the groves gives away all his property and effects, as if about to die to the

noise. It is a whistle made of hollowed mangrove-wood, about two inches in length, and covered at one end with a scrap of bat's wing. For a period of five days after initiation the novice wears an apron of dried palm-leaves, which I have frequently seen. The initiation of the girls is performed by elderly females, who call themselves Ngembi. They go into the forest, clear a space, sweep the ground carefully, come back to the town, and build a sacred hut, which no male may enter. They return to the clearing in the forest, taking with them the Igonji, or novice. It is necessary that she should have never been to that place before, and that she fast during the whole of the ceremony, which lasts three days. All this time a fire is kept burning in the wood. From morning to night, and from night to morning, a Ngembi sits beside it and feeds it, singing, with a cracked voice, 'The fire will never die out.' The third night is passed in the sacred hut; the Igonji is rubbed with black, red, and white paints, and, as the men beat drums outside, she cries, 'Okanda, yo, yo, yo,' which reminds one of the *Evohe* of the ancient *Bacchantes*. The ceremonies performed in the hut and in the wood are kept secret from the men, and I can say but little about them. . . . During the novitiate which succeeds initiation the girls are taught religious dances; the men are instructed in the science of fetich. It is then that they are told that there are certain kinds of food which are forbidden to their clan. One clan may not eat crocodile, nor another hippopotamus, nor a third buffalo."

world, and on the completion of his novitiate, when he returns to his kindred, he pretends to forget all his past life and to know neither father nor mother, nor relations nor former friends,—his is a new life; his whole aspect is that of a new man, for he now carries on his head a cap made of the bark of a tree, he is adorned with feathers, and as a badge of his new rank he wears a collar of leopards' teeth round his neck. During the five years of his training the probationer is attended by some old and experienced devotees who act as his instructors; they teach him the ritual of their religion, various songs and pieces of poetry, mostly in praise of their chief god, and, in particular, he learns from them a dance of a frenzied kind. While this course of education is proceeding, the king frequently visits the groves and examines the candidates. When their training is sufficiently advanced, they receive each a new name, and, as a token of their regeneration, several long wounds, which afterwards become permanent scars, are made on their neck and shoulders. They are now conducted to some retired place at a distance where women may attend them. Here, their religious education being already complete, they are instructed in those principles of morals and politics which will make them useful as members of the state, and fit to act as judges in civil and criminal causes. This done, they leave the groves and their tutors, and, with their new badges of perfection upon them, they exhibit their magical powers in public by means of a stick driven into the ground, with a bundle of reeds at its top, or they repair to the public assembly, and join in the solemn dances of the wise men or in the duties of civic rulers.

The aboriginal races of India also have observances similar to those of the African negroes; for I learn from a lecture delivered last year in this hall that, among some of the Dravidian tribes of Central India, "persons desiring to enter the priesthood are required to retire for some days to the jungle and commune in solitude with the deity. Before they are confirmed in their office, they are expected to perform some marvellous act as evidence of their having acquired superhuman power." In another tribe, the novice "retires to the jungle, and there remains alone and without clothing for eight days, during which time he performs certain purificatory rites. On the eighth day he returns and enters upon the discharge of his duties."*

So far the negroes of Upper Guinea. I now turn to Australia; and there, when a boy approaches the age of puberty, a feeling of restless anticipation spreads over his

* *Transactions Victoria Institute*, vol. xix., pp. 103, 104.

mind, for he knows that his opening manhood has brought him to the threshold of ceremonies of mysterious import, through which he is to be formally received into the tribe and thereby to acquire the dignity of a man. The rites of initiation are important, numerous, and prolonged; and, as his admission does not concern himself or his family merely, but the whole tribe, these observances call together large assemblages, and are the occasion of general rejoicing.

This assembly,—the most solemn and unique in the tribal life,—is called the Bora. The whole proceedings are essentially the same everywhere in their general features and teachings, but the details vary among the different tribes. Therefore, instead of a separate narrative for each tribe, I will endeavour to present to you a full view of the Bora, taking one tribal mode as the basis of my description, but introducing from the other tribes such features as appear to me needed to complete the significance of the ceremonies.

The chiefs of the tribes know that some boys are ready for initiation; they accordingly summon their "marbull," or public messenger, and bid him inform the sections of the tribe that a Bora will be held at a certain time and place, the time being near full moon, and the place being usually a well-known Bora ground; they also send him away to invite the neighbouring tribes to attend; this invitation is readily accepted, for, although the tribes may be at variance with each other, universal brotherhood prevails among the blacks at such a time as this. The day appointed for the gathering is, perhaps, a week or two distant, and the intervening time is filled with busy preparations by the leading men of the novice's tribe. They select a suitable piece of ground, near water, if possible, and level for convenience in sitting or lying on; they then form and clear of all timber, and in most cases even of every blade of grass, two circular enclosures, a larger and a smaller, about a quarter of a mile from each other, with a straight track connecting them*; the trees that grow around the smaller circle they carve at about the height of a man, often much higher, with curious emblematical devices and figures; the circuit of each ring is defined by a slight mound of earth laid around, and in the centre of the larger one they fix a short pole with a bunch of emu feathers on the top of it. Everything is now ready for the rites of initiation, and there is a large concourse; the men stand by with their bodies painted in stripes of colour, chiefly red and white; the women,

* In the Bora grounds which I have examined this path leads due east and west by the compass.

who are permitted to be present at the opening ceremony only, are lying on the ground all round the larger ring with their faces covered. The boy, painted red all over (I speak of only one, but there are several boys initiated at once), is brought forward and made to lie down in the middle of it, and covered with an opossum rug. Such of the old men as have been appointed masters of the ceremonies now begin to throw him into a state of fear and awe by sounding an instrument called *tirricoty*, similar to what an English boy calls a "bull roarer." This same "bull roarer" is found in Central Africa, and is there also used as a sacred instrument. In Australia the men use it on all occasions when they wish to frighten the women and boys, who cower with fear whenever they hear it. It is made of a piece of thin wood or bark; it is about nine inches long, and is sometimes shaped and marked like a fish. The roaring sound is supposed to be the voice of a dreaded evil spirit who prowls about the black fellows' camp, especially at night, and carries off, tears, and devours those he can seize. When the performers think that the "boombat" (so they call the novice) has been sufficiently impressed, *tirricoty* ceases to speak; they then raise the boy from the ground and set him in the ring, so that his face is turned towards the cleared track which leads to the circle of imagery; then an old man comes forward, breathes strongly in his face, and makes him cast his eyes upon the ground, for in this humble attitude he must continue for some days.

Two other old men next take the boy by the arms and lead him along the track, and set him in the middle of the other enclosure. As soon as this is done, the women rise from their prostrate position and begin to dance and sing. The Murring tribe, on our S.E. coast, place along this track or path figures moulded in earth of various animals (the *totems*), and one of Daramulun, a spirit god whom they fear. Before each of these figures the devotees have a dance, and a "Koradjie" (that is, doctor or medicine man) brings up out of his inside by his mouth, the "jo-e-a" or magic of the *totem* before which he stands; for the porcupine he shows stuff like chalk, for the kangaroo stuff like glass, and so on. Meanwhile the boy has been sitting in the smaller circle with downcast eyes; he is told to rise, and is led in succession to each of the carved trees around it, and is made to look up for a moment at the carvings on them, and while he does so the old men raise a shout.* When he has come to know all the

* A fire is kept constantly burning in the centre of this ring; with this compare the Vestal fire at Rome. The boy is made to lie within the ring prone

carvings sufficiently, the men give him a new name, which *must not* be revealed to the uninitiated, and they hand to him a little bag containing one or more small stones of crystal quartz; this bag he will always carry about his person, and the stones must not be shown to the uninitiated on pain of death. This concludes the first part of the performance.

The "boombat" is next conveyed, blindfolded, to a large camp at a distance of several miles, no woman being near, and food is given to him, which he eats still with his eyes cast down; here they keep him for eight or ten days, and teach him their tribal lore by showing him their dances and their songs; these he learns, especially one song of which I can tell nothing further than that it is important for the boy to know it. These songs, they say, were given them by Baiamai, the great Creator. At night, during this period, the "boombat" is set by himself in secluded and darksome places, and all around the men make hideous noises, at which he must not betray the least sign of fear. At some part of the ceremony a sacred wand is shown him; of this Ridley says:—"This old man, Billy, told me, as a great favour, what other blacks had withheld as a mystery too sacred to be disclosed to a white man, that "dhurumbulum," a stick or wand, is exhibited at the Bora, and that the sight of it inspires the initiated with manhood. This sacred wand was the gift of Baiamai. The ground on which the Bora is celebrated is Baiamai's ground. Billy believes the Bora will be kept up always all over the country; such was the command of Baiamai."

Another conspicuous part of the inner Bora customs is the knocking out of one of the upper front teeth of the "boombat." The tooth is then conveyed from one sub-tribe to another until it has made the circuit of the whole tribe; on its return it is given to the owner or kept by the head man. It is said that an ancient shield (*cf.* the sacred Ancilia of Rome), handed down from past ages, and regarded as almost equal to Daramulun himself, accompanied the tooth. This tooth-breaking, however, is not practised by some of the larger tribes; but instead of it there is circumcision, cutting of the hair, &c.

on the ground for weeks, it may be, getting only a very little food and water now and then. When he wishes to go outside, the old men *carry* him over the circle-mound. With this compare the sacredness of the *pomerium* circuit of ancient Rome. One black boy told me that when he was initiated, he joined the Bora in the month of August, and did not get away till about Christmas. When the blacks in charge of the sacred circle at last bade him rise from his recumbent position, he said he was so weak that he staggered and fell.

All these formalities being now completed, the "boombat's" probation is at an end. They now proceed, all of them together, to some large water-hole, and, jumping in, men and boys, they wash off the colouring matter from their bodies, amid much glee, and noise, and merriment, and, when they have come out of the water, they paint themselves white.

Meanwhile, the women, who have been called to resume their attendance, have kindled a large fire not far off, and are lying around it, with their faces covered as at the first; the two old men, who were the original initiators, bring the boy at a run towards the fire, followed by all the others, with voices indeed silent, but making a noise by beating their *boomerangs* together; the men join hands and form a ring round the fire, and one old man runs round the inside of the ring beating a *heelaman* or shield. A woman, usually the boy's own mother, then steps within the ring, and, catching him under the arms, lifts him from the ground once, sets him down, and then retires; everybody, the boy included, now jumps upon the decaying red embers, until the fire is extinguished.

Thus ends the Bora; the youth is now a man, for his initiation and his instruction are over. But, although these are formalities observed in admitting a youth into the tribe, yet in the Bora, as in Freemasonry, the novice does not become a full member all at once, but must pass through several grades, and these are obtained by attending a certain number of Boras; here also, as in Africa, restrictions as to food are imposed, which are relaxed from time to time, until at last the youth is permitted to eat anything he may find: thus the process of qualifying for full membership may extend over two or three years. Then he becomes an acknowledged member of the tribe, undertakes all the duties of membership, and has a right to all its privileges.

I have thus finished my description of the Bora ceremonies, and, as a sort of introduction to that description, I gave at the outset a condensed account of similar observances both in Africa and in India.

Now, when I cast my eye over the Bora and its regulated forms, I feel myself constrained to ask, "What does all this mean?" I, for one, cannot believe that the Bora, with all its solemnities (for the rites were sacred, and the initiated were bound not to divulge what they had seen and done), is a meaningless, self-developed thing; still less that the same thing can have developed spontaneously in Australia and in farthest Africa; I prefer to see in it a symbolism covering ancestral beliefs,—a symbolism intelligible enough to the

Kushite race at first, but now little understood, but yet superstitiously observed, by their Australian descendants.

Accordingly I now proceed to what I regard as the most important part of this inquiry, for I shall attempt to show that in many respects the Bora corresponds with the religious beliefs and practices of the ancient world. If we can prove that the germ ideas which underlie the Australian Bora as it has always been celebrated among the aborigines are the same as those in many religions of antiquity, and that these same ideas present themselves in ceremonies of similar import among nations now widely separated in place, I think we have established a strong presumption that there is a common source from which all these things have sprung, and that there is a community of origin on which this community of belief is founded.

And here I wish to enlist the sympathy and assistance of this intelligent audience. There are among you many who have a full and accurate knowledge of the religious systems of Africa and India, and who can therefore give valuable aid in tracing analogies sufficient to build up my argument to the dimensions of substantial proof. I ask these gentlemen to assist me, either now by oral remarks, or afterwards in any form which they may prefer. My present theme is a small contribution to an argument for the unity of the human race as to its origin, and while I work in the Australian field, which is as yet little known, I shall gratefully receive any help which may come from fields that have been long explored.

I now offer to you such analogies as my limited knowledge permits me to refer to:—

(A.) In the Bora there are two circles, the one is less sacred, for the women may be present there, although only on the outskirts; in it certain preparatory things are done in order to bring the “boombat’s” mind into a fit state of reverential awe for the reception of the teaching in the other circle,—the *adytum*, the *penetralia*,—where the images of the gods are to be seen; the women and the uninitiated must not approach this inner circle, for it is thrice holy; “*Procul este, profani.*”

(a.) In the earliest religions, the circle is the invariable symbol of the sun,—the bright and pure one, from whose presence darkness and every evil thing must flee away. Thus we have the disc as the symbol of the sun-god in Egypt, Chaldæa, Assyria, Persia, India, China. This fact is so well known that it is needless to multiply examples. Those who are within the circle are safe from the powers of evil. The

sacredness of the circle in those early ages is seen from the Chaldæan name (Genesis xxxi. 47), "the circle of witness,"—a name given to a solemn compact of friendship witnessed by that celestial orb which looks down on and observes all the deeds of men. In Persia, to this day, in the southern parts of it, which were originally inhabited by a Hamite race of an almost purely negroid type, there are to be seen on the roadsides large circles of stones which the tradition of the country regards as set there by the Caous, a race of giants, that is, of aboriginals. Their name closely resembles the name Kush, as does also Cutch at the north of the Indus, and other geographical names along the Arabian seas. Then in the classic nations, both in Greece and Italy, some of the most famous temples were circular in form, especially the Pantheon at Athens; and, at Rome, the temple of Vesta, the goddess of the sun-given, eternal fire. At Rome also, for 100 years from the foundation of the city, the worship of the gods was celebrated in the open air (*cf.* the Bora), often in sacred groves; and there also the temple of Janus, the oldest and most venerated of the Roman gods, was merely a sacred enclosure upon which no building stood till the time of the First Punic War. The *pomærium*, or circuit of the walls of Rome, was a sacred ring, and the Circus was consecrated to the sun, and was open to the sky. In Britain, too, the fire worship of the Druids led them to construct ring temples in various places, and especially at Stonehenge, where there are two rings as in the Bora, but concentric. Even the rude Laplanders, who are sprung from the same Turanian race which was one of the earliest elements in the population of Babylonia, make two circles when they sacrifice to the sun, and surround them with willows; they also draw a white thread through the ear of the animal to be sacrificed, and white, as we shall presently see, is the sun's livery.

(B.) In the Bora, the two rings, both of them sacred, communicate with each other by means of a narrow passage, in which are earthen representations of certain objects of worship; the inner contains the images or symbols of the gods carved on trees, and the novice is so placed in the outer ring that he faces the passage and the shrine of the gods; he is turned to the east (see note, page 162).

(b.) The inner shrine is an arrangement common to all religions. At Babylon in the temple of Belus, which was built in stages, the worshipper had to pass through these seven stages of Sabæism before he reached the shrine; this was the topmost of all, and contained a golden image of the god; each of these stages was devoted to the worship of one

of the Babylonian gods. So also, in the Bora, the worshipper advances by stages along the passage leading from the one circle to the other, and pays his devotions to each of the images in succession. In Greece and in Rome the roofed temples were commonly arranged in two parts, an inner and an outer, and the statue of the god was so placed that a worshipper, entering by the external door, saw it right before him. At the very ancient temple of Dodonæan Zeus, in Greece, the god was supposed to reside in an oak tree, and it is quite possible that the *Xoanon*, or wooden image of the god, was here, as in other grove worship, merely a carved piece of oak as in the Bora. In this sense Festus gives *Fustis decorticatus* as an equivalent for *delubrum*. The student of Biblical archæology will also remember the Asherah of the Israelite idolaters, the consort of the sun-god Baal; this was a wooden pillar or statue of the goddess which could be cut down and burned. Such a pillar our black fellows also have been known to erect; for on one occasion several men of a tribe which is well known to me were seen to cut down a soft cedar tree; they dressed it with their hatchets, and cut the end of it into the rude figure of a head and face; they then carried it some distance down the river to a sandy spot, and, setting it up there like a pillar, they danced in a circle around it. This was certainly an act of worship, the same as many other acts of worship in the heathen world. Was it merely a happy thought on the part of these black fellows, or undesigned coincidence, which led them to do so; or was it a portion of an ancestral form of worship brought from other lands?

(C.) In the Bora, the novice in the outer circle has his body all painted over with red, but at the close of his novitiate he washes in a pool, is thereby cleansed, and then paints himself all white. The other members of the tribe paint themselves red and white for the ceremony; they, too, at the close, wash in the pool and retire white like the "boombat." This transformation is to them a source of much rejoicing.

(c.) Among the black races the colour red was the symbol of evil; and so Plutarch tells us that the Egyptians sacrificed only red bullocks to Typhon, and that the animal was reckoned unfit for this sacrifice if a single white or black hair could be found on it; in certain of their festivals the Egyptians assailed with insults and revilings any among them who happened to have red hair, and the people of Coptos had a custom of throwing an ass down a precipice because of its red colour. The god Typhon was to the Egyptians the embodied cause of everything evil, malignant, destructive, man-hating in the economy of nature, just as Osiris, the bright

and beneficent sun, was an emblem of all that was good. In the Levitical economy, the red heifer was a sin-offering for the Israelites, probably with some reference to the Egyptian ideas about this colour. In India, Ganesa, the lord of all mischievous and malignant spirits, is symbolised by red stones, and the Cingalese, when they are sick, offer a red cock to the evil spirit that has caused the sickness. The blacks of Congo wash and anoint a corpse and then paint it red, and their black brethren of Madagascar, when they are celebrating the rite of circumcision, never wear anything red about them lest the child should bleed to death. The negroes of Upper Guinea, far enough removed from Australian Boras to prevent even a suspicion of borrowing, make a similar use of the colours red and white; for in Benin, when a woman is first initiated into the rites which the Babylonians sanctioned in honour of their goddess Mulitta, she seats herself on a mat in a public place, and covers her head, shoulders, and arms with the blood of a fowl; she then retires for her devotions, and, these being finished, she washes herself, returns, and is rubbed all over with white chalk where the blood had been. The young ladies of Congo, also a black country, have a similar custom, but they besmear their faces and necks with red paint.

In Australia, those who pass through the Bora paint themselves white at its close. Everywhere in Australia there is the belief that the black man when he is dead and buried still lives, but he is then white; the aborigines say "black fellow jumps up a white fellow"; hence their name for white man is "wunda," a word which originally described only the black man in his spirit state after death. The father of a friend of mine was the first white man to enter, some fifty years ago, the territory of a black tribe near to where I lived; it so happened that the tribe had just lost their chief by death, and, as the white man whom they saw coming over the crest of the hill towards their camp bore some physical resemblance to the deceased, they soon got to hail him as their chief in the "wunda" state, and to this hour they claim that white man's son as one of themselves, a brother!

Now, in the ancient rituals, white was the colour sacred to the sun, the benign god, before whom darkness flies away. In India, white agates represent Siva, the eternal cause of all blessings; in Persia, white horses were sacred to the sun; in Celtic Britain, some of the Welsh people even now whiten their houses to keep away devils; and so with many other examples.

In these senses the "boombat" enters the Bora with the

brand of Typhon upon him, exposed to all evil influences, to disease and death from animals, men, and spirits; but after he has made the acquaintance of his fathers' gods, and has learned the sacred songs and dances of his tribe, he comes forth another man; he washes away the badge of darkness and evil, and assumes the livery of the children of light. The other men, whose mottled colour is a confession of mingled good and evil in their lives, also emerge new men once more, purified and devoted anew to the service of the good, and freed from the power of the evil.

This felt subjection to unseen evil and aspiration for deliverance from it in the minds of our native races, is not only natural to man everywhere, but was a marked feature in the whole system of Akkadian magic; for these old Chaldæans believed that innumerable spirits, each with a personality, were distributed throughout nature, sometimes in union with animate objects, sometimes separately. Existing everywhere, they had each both an evil and a good aspect, at one time favourable, at another unfavourable, controlling both life and death, regulating all the phenomena, beneficial or destructive, of air, earth, fire, or water. A dual spirit, bad and good, was attached to each of the celestial bodies, and each living being; a constant warfare existed and was keenly maintained between the bad and the good, and, according as the one principle or the other held sway, so did blessings or disasters descend upon nature and upon man. Hence the value of religious rites, such as the Bora; for the due observance of these, repeated from time to time, gave for a while, at least, the victory to the good spirits, and brought blessings to the faithful. Thus, then, I explain the red colour of the novice at the Bora; the red and white of the celebrants, and the white colour of the whole when the service was completed.

(D.) Ridley says that the Bora is Baiamai's ground. He adds: "Baiamai sees all; he knows all, if not directly, yet through Turramūlan, a subordinate deity. Turramūlan is mediator for all the operations of Baiamai to man, and from man to Baiamai." "Women must not see Turramūlan on pain of death. And even when mention is made of Turramūlan, or of the Bora at which he presides, the women slink away, knowing that it is unlawful for them so much as to hear anything about such matters."

(d.) We have seen that in some places an image of Daramūlan is set up at the Bora. In another place, the bull-roaring instrument, whose voice begins the ceremony of the Bora and warns the women not to look, is called *tirricoty*, and is sometimes made in the shape of a fish; the magic

wand that Ridley mentions is called *dhūrumbulum*; and the great ancestral Bora ground of the Kamilaroi tribe in New South Wales is at *Tirri-hai-hai*. In Victoria this same roaring instrument is called *turndun*, which I think should be written *dhurru-dun*. All these names are identical, and only modifications of *dara-mūlun*; thus, with a slight alteration of the spelling, we have *turra-mul-un durru-m-dun*, *durru-m-bulun*, *tirri-coty*, *tirri-hai-hai*. The root of all these forms I take to be *dara*, *dar*, Sanskrit *dri*, meaning to protect, a root found in all the great branches of human speech, and furnishing derivatives which mean "a prince," "a governor," "a lord," "a supreme ruler." I therefore take *Daramūlun* to mean something like "Lord of the mysteries," for it is evident that he presides at the Bora, and is the source of the blessings therein communicated. The use of a fish-shaped roarer to indicate his presence leads me to compare him with the Chaldæan god, *Hoā*, *Hea*, half man, half fish, who, in the Chaldæo-Babylonian religion, was revered as the revealer of all religious and social knowledge. His abode was the sea, the Persian Gulf, where he passed the night, but by day he remained among men to instruct them; thus he became a legislator and protector. *Hea*, as a god, "seesthat all is in order," and, being acquainted with all sciences, he can baffle the powers of evil by his magic arts. With this I compare the "magic" shown by the Koradjie in the Bora in the presence of *Daramūlun*'s image. The Akkadians, and from them the Babylonians, invoked the aid of *Hea*, when spells and enchantments were found unavailing against the power of demons. So in the Bora passage, when *Daramūlun* had been duly honoured and magic influence conjured up for the driving away of all adverse spirits, the lad is taken into the inner circle and sees the gods of his fathers, and learns to know them and their attributes, just as in the greater Eleusinia of Greece the duly qualified were, after a course of previous preparation, led into the inner sanctuary in the darkness of night, and there, by a dim light, allowed to see and know the holy things.

(E.) The next step in the process of initiation is interesting: (1) a sacred wand is shown to the "boombat;" (2) he gets a new name; and (3) certain white stones are given to him.

(e.) (1) The wand. In this there is the notion of consecration and sacredness; for, on the Egyptian monuments, the deities are constantly represented as holding in one hand a long rod or wand, with a crook on the upper end of it. The king also, and some of the higher officers of state, carry this

“crook.” In India we find that Yama, the regent of the South, has a name from a sacred staff or rod, and some religious impostors wear as badges of sanctity a “staff” and a deer’s skin. The Magi of Persia carried the *Bareçma* or *barsom*, a divining wand as one of the badges of their ministry and the magicians of Egypt similarly had rods in their hands when they stood in the presence of Pharaoh. The traditions of Peru speak of a sacred golden wand borne by the son and daughter of the Sun. These are analogies; but the nearest approach to the use of the wand in the Bora is, I think, to be found in the Finnish Kalevala, where there is a reference to a “celebrated wand” (evidently as in Peru a sun wand) which protects its possessor from all spells and enchantments; even the gods are glad to use it against the powers of evil. (2) A new name. Having now acquired a knowledge of sacred things, the initiated is henceforth a new man, he is “twice born,” and like his kinsman in Upper Guinea, already described, he will come out to the world in a new character, renouncing his former state. In India, a youth becomes one of the “twice born,” by investiture with the sacred cord, receiving thus a spiritual birth; thereafter, like our “boombat,” he passes into the hands of religious preceptors, who teach him the sacred prayers, mystic words, and devotional ceremonies. In more modern times, when a monastic house or a nunnery receives, from the world without, one more recluse, a new name is given by which he or she may thenceforward be known in religion. The underlying idea in all these instances is that a religious profession gives one a new character and a new relation to the rest of the world. And who will deny that this is true, whether the professor be black or white? (3) The white stones. I am inclined to think that the “boombat” receives only one of these at a time, and that the number of them increases according to the number of Boras he attends until he becomes a full and accepted master of the craft. In any case they are used as talismans, and are carried in the belt during the whole of the man’s life. They are merely small pieces of quartz crystals, but are so sacred that they must not be shown to the women.* The negroes of Guinea use small stones as fetishes, which they carry about their necks or under their armpits. These the priests sell after a formal consecration. The white colour is a sun colour. It is beneficent

* *Moorl* is the name for the white crystals. A Koradjie, in the presence of a friend of mine, swallowed three or four small ones, saying, “That fellow stick there.” He believed that the crystals would give him more power as a medicine-man.

and preservative against evil, as already shown; hence the Hindoos dedicate white stones to Siva, the eternally blessed one.

Under this head I venture to refer to the promise given to the Church in Pergamos (Revelation ii. 17) in these words: "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." On this passage commentators have given the most diverse opinions in explanation of the white stone and the new name. The very diversity of their opinions leads me to think that in this passage there is a reference to some heathen and idolatrous rites well known to the Pergamenes, part, it may be, of the religion of their ancestors, as in the Bora ceremonies; for in the Bora there is the white stone and the new name which must not be divulged. I cannot stay to examine this curious analogy, but I think that some light might be got to illustrate the passage if one were to explore the source of the early population of Pergamos and its forms of worship. It will probably be found that both were in some way Chaldæan, and that the worship was very sensual and degrading, such as was the worship of Mulitta in Babylon. This would explain how it is that in the message to the Church in Pergamos the expression occurs, "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is"; and again, "Among you where Satan dwelleth," the city being thus twice in one short message described as a stronghold of Satan; it would also explain the reference to "fornication," and "things sacrificed to idols," and "the teaching of Balaam." If I were for a moment to assume the garb of a commentator, I would paraphrase the promise to the Pergamene Church somewhat in this manner:—"To him that overcometh, that is, to him that rises above the abounding evil and remains faithful in his new profession, will I give . . . a white stone, a pledge of purity and a safeguard against the wicked practices so common among you where Satan dwelleth, and a new name to show that he has put off his former state of slavery to sin, and has become a new man in the service of a new master, who is pure, and holy, and undefiled."

(F.) The initiated lad is next led to a camp at a distance; he is kept there for eight or ten days receiving instruction, specially in songs and dances; he also eats here, and his confidence in divine protection is tested by hideous noises during the darkness of the night.

(f.) It is rather singular, as a coincidence, that Festus speaks of Roman ceremonies as lasting ten days, and that the Dionysia and the greater Eleusinia of Greece also lasted

nine or ten days, and that part of them was a solemn meal and a solemn bathing, or purification by water; thereafter instruction was given. So, also, a young Brahman must reside with his preceptor for some time, until he has gained a thorough knowledge of the holy books; he must pass through certain purificatory rites, which remove the taint of former sin; one of these is the cutting off of the hair, and with this seems to correspond the knocking out of a front tooth practised by some of our tribes in Australia.* The singing and the dancing are everywhere essential parts of the heathen worship, and the dance is in its origin religious.

(G.) Then come the washing and the purification which I have just spoken of, but after that they join hands all round, dance round the fire, and then jump into it and through it.

(g.) Analogies to this purification and protection by fire are abundant. In Bretagne, at this hour, the farmers protect their horses from evil influences by the service of fire. They kindle fires at nightfall; then, at dawn of day, the horses are led thrice round the fires, and a particular prayer, known only to a few, is said before the dying flame; as the last words are pronounced, they all leap on the embers with their feet joined. The ancient British Kelts, to which stock the modern Bretons belong, did much the same thing. On May Day the Druids used to light large fires on the summits of the highest hills, into which they drove their four-footed beasts, using certain ceremonies to expiate the sins of the people. Until very lately, in different parts of Ireland, it was the common practice to kindle fires in milking yards on the first day of May, and then many women and children leaped through them, and the cattle were driven through in order to avert evil influences. In ancient Rome, on the feast of Pales, in April, the same forms of purification and dedication were observed. The Hottentots of the present day retain the old customs, for they make their cattle pass through the fire as a preservative against the attacks of wild dogs. In India, the youth, when about to be invested with the sacred thread, stands opposite the sun and walks thrice round the fire; and in the marriage ceremony the bride is led thrice round the sacred fire. An incantation used by the oldest Chaldean sorcerers has these words: "May the god Fire, the hero, dispel their enchantments or spells for the injury of others." An Australian *gin*, going to the river to fetch water after nightfall, carries for protection a burning stick; and the men

* In some parts of Australia the hair is cut off or singed off in the Bora.

in the camp, when they think an evil spirit is near, throw firebrands at him to drive him away. We may not wonder, then, that our Australian black fellows, if, as I believe, their ancestors came from Babylonian lands, have not forgotten the fire observances, and still trust in the protection of the fire-god.

So far the Bora and its analogies. I have thus considered at some length the institution of the Bora, both because it is the most important of all the social regulations of our aboriginal tribes, and because its universal distribution among them, although with slight local differences in the manner of its celebration, seems to me a strong proof that our black tribes are all brethren of the same race, and that they are of the same common origin as the rest of mankind, their nearest kin being the blacks of Africa. Is it possible that so many tribes, differing in language and confined by their laws and habits each to its own hunting ground, should have evolved from their own consciousness ceremonies so similar, and which, when examined, correspond in so many points with the religiousness of the ancient world? How is it that the blacks of Australia and the blacks of Guinea have similar ceremonies of initiation? Is it not because they have come from the same ethnic source and have a common ancestry and common traditions?

And now to complete the task which I proposed to myself, I would add a few words of aboriginal mythology, as another point in the argument for the unity of the human family.

Our native races are attentive observers of the stars; as they sit or lie around the camp fire after nightfall, their gaze naturally turns to the starry vault above, and there they see the likenesses of many things with which they are conversant in their daily life; young men dancing a corroboree (Orion) and a group of damsels looking at them (the Pleiades) making music to their dance; the opossum, the emu, the crow, and so on. But the old men say that the regions "above the sky" are the home of the spirits of the dead, and that there are fig-trees there, and many other pleasant things, and that the head of them is a great man *Miny*; he is not visible, but they all agree that he is in the sky. A greater than he is the great Garabooung, who, while in earth, was always attended by a small man, but now the two shine as comrades in the sky—the "Heavenly Twins." Both Garabooung and *Miny* are "skeletons." In his mortal state, Garabooung was a man of great rank and power; he was so tall that his feet could touch the bottom of the deepest rivers; his only food was snakes and eels. One day, not being hungry, he buried

a snake and an eel; when he came back to eat them he saw fire issuing from the ground where they were; he was warned by his companion, the little man, not to approach, but he declared he did not fear, and boldly came near; then a whirlwind seized them and carried them up "above the sky," where he and his companion still are, and "can be seen any starlit night."

These two legends are interesting. Minny is to them the father and king of the black races, whom he now rules and will rule in spirit-land; he was once a mortal, but now he is a "skeleton,"—a spiritualised being without flesh and blood; and so our black fellows retain the simple primitive beliefs of mankind; they have heard nothing of annihilation or absorption into the infinite. I observe also that the name of their great father is the same as that given on the hieroglyphic inscriptions to the first king of Egypt, Menee—by Herodotus called Menes—the head of the First Dynasty of mortals. He was a public benefactor, for he executed several important works, and taught his people the worship of Phtah, the great artificer-god of Egypt. He must have some mythical relation to the human race, for in Greece he is Minos, king of Crete, "Minoia regna," author of many useful laws, and afterwards a judge of the shades of the dead; in another part of Greece he is Minyas, the founder of a race of heroes; in India he is Menu, and in Old Germany Mannus; for I take all these to be the same name.

The story of Garabooung seems to correspond with that of the Dioscouroi—Castor and Pollux,—who were also mighty heroes and benefactors of mankind. The ancient Germans worshipped them in a sacred grove, and called them Alcis.

How have our black fellows got hold of the name Minny, and such a myth about him? Were the name and the myth invented by them? Are they not rather a survival—derived from a common origin—of traditions which belong to the once undivided human family?

In conclusion, let any one ask me how it is that our aborigines, if they are of such an origin as I assign to them, have sunk so low in the scale of humanity as to be regarded among the most degraded of the races of men. I deny that this estimate of them is well founded; on the contrary, I assert that it was formed long ago by those who imperfectly understood the habits and social organisation of our native tribes, and has been ignorantly passed from mouth to mouth ever since; that, when they are thoroughly understood, our black fellows are not the despicable savages that they are too often represented to be. They have, or had, virtues which

we might profitably imitate ; for they are faithful and affectionate to those who treat them kindly ; they have rules of family morality which are enforced by severe penalties ; they show the greatest respect to age ; they carefully tend and never desert the sick and infirm ; their boys are compelled to content themselves with meagre fare, and to bring the best of the food which they have found and present it to the aged members of the tribe and to those who have large families. I am assured by one who has had much intercourse with them for thirty years that he never knew them to tell a lie, and that his property was always safe in their hands ; another who has been familiar with them since he was a child says :—“ Naturally they are an affectionate, peaceful people, and, considering that they have never been taught to know right from wrong, their behaviour is wonderful ; I leave my house open, the camp close by, and feel the greatest confidence in them.”

Then, again, although the material civilisation of the world was commenced by the race of Ham, yet the task soon fell from their hands, for morally they were unfit for it ; for the conservation and first dissemination of a pure and ennobling religion we are indebted to the race of Shem ; while the sons of Japheth have gone forth to rule the earth and the sea—“ *audax Iapeti genus* ”—and to spread abroad the blessings of good government and the arts and inventions of an enlightened age to the remotest lands. The Hamites, on the other hand, have continued to sink in the social scale, have been persecuted and oppressed by the other races and thus debased ; and whenever, as in Australia, the sky above and the earth beneath have conspired to render the means of life to them meagre and precarious, there the process of decay has been accelerated, and physically their condition has been very low ; but still, among their social institutions, we have this evening, I trust, seen traces of their having once enjoyed a better state of things. Would that we had a full record of what they really are before they pass entirely away from among us !

THE CHAIRMAN (D. Howard, Esq., F.C.S., &c.).—I am sure that all present would have been glad if the author of the paper could have been here to receive our thanks for the very interesting and valuable information he has been the means of placing before us on

a subject of so much importance. Such records as these of what is to be learned of the far distant races of the world are indeed of great value. It is true that the idea has gained ground, in not few quarters, that the aborigines of Australia are so utterly degraded and so devoid of the ordinary distinguishing marks of humanity that they can hardly be said to be men at all, or, at any rate, men of the same species as ourselves. But the testimony we have had to-night from one who has long lived among them, and who, therefore, speaks of his own knowledge, is extremely valuable, inasmuch as it presents a very different view, and makes it clear that those who take the trouble to become acquainted with these races, and by treating them with kindness come to know them intimately, are able to tell a very different story from that which is told by those who have only come in contact with them to tyrannise over and ill-treat them. It has been frequently and boldly stated that the aborigines of Australia have no religious customs. I am afraid that a great many ignorant people are too apt to be shy of making their religion public, so that others may conclude they have none at all; why, therefore, should we suppose that the habit of reticence which induces so many to keep their religious feelings in the background is not to be met with in other races than our own? Is it not a rule that, what men care most about, they talk least about, especially before strangers? And, if this be so, ought we not, when we find it stated that such and such a race is entirely devoid of any religious feeling or sentiment, to assume that the assertion is made from want of knowledge, and that in all probability the contrary is the fact. We know it is being brought out more and more clearly that the negro race, whose fetish worship we have heard so much about, know nothing about fetish worship, such as is frequently described; and, therefore, if most of the statements that have been made about them are unreliable, so also may be those that have been put forward with regard to the Australian aborigines, whose very remarkable religious customs have been traced out by the author of this paper, as well as the extraordinary connexion that exists between their religious customs and those practised by the black race in Africa. It is, consequently, for those who say that these natives of Australia are not of the same race or nature as our own, to explain how the religious ideas, of which we have now heard, can have sprung up independently, especially the idea of that dim, shadowy kind of

regeneration, or second life, which would seem to be a part of their religious system. It is very interesting to trace the customs that are so strongly developed in this,—ethnologically,—out-of-the-way corner of the earth, and to find expressed, in the manner related by the author of the paper, the idea of the mysteries of initiation, as well as other ideas that have been rendered familiar to us through the classical literature which describes the Eleusinian and other mysteries, derived no doubt from Egypt, which were from a Hamite source; and these we find, in almost every feature of the familiar type, developed in the far-away portion of the earth with which we have been dealing. I hope that those present who may have something to say on this subject will now give us the benefit of their views.

Rev. F. A. WALKER, D.D., F.L.S.—On page 167 it is stated that “the *pomerium*, or circuit of the walls of Rome, was a sacred ring, and the circus was consecrated to the sun and was open to the sky.” I should like to say that there is much in the nature of a counterpart of this, on a small scale, still extant in the ruins of Ephesus. There is a circular platform evidently, at one time, part of the shrine of the sun, and having a circular base; in the middle there is the corolla of a flower and around it the remains of what would exactly have resembled the petals of the sunflower. It is not part of the circus, and it may be as well to mention that it is very near the *stadium* or racecourse which still exists there.

Rev. J. B. STEPHENSON.—I have lived for a while in Australia, and as regards the native belief in a God I may state that I have, in the course of my travels, come across a great many cases in which men of the very lowest type have shown that they all had some idea of religious worship, and my conclusion is that the reason for this is to be found in the fact that God has put into their minds faculties which compel them, as a matter of necessity,—of absolute necessity,—to worship Him, and the more we analyse the minds of men the more, I think, shall we be inclined to come to this conclusion.

Rev. H. WALKER-TAYLOR.—As an Australian clergyman I venture to say just a few words on what the writer of the paper has brought before us. I am sure we are all very much indebted to the author for having dealt so ably with a subject which, in many of its aspects, is comparatively unknown. I certainly do object to the idea that has been getting abroad for many years that the aborigines of Australia are a degraded people. Any one coming in contact with

them, and knowing their religious traditions, must see that those traditions are based on something more ancient and something which shows that they hold the idea of a spiritual being, and that they look on the curious life of this world as a life of work and thought, having relation towards a life of action and thought to come. One who knows a great deal of Australia and the Australians, says that the ordinary idea of omnipotence, goodness, and eternity is distinctly characterised in the religious ideas of the Australian natives. As to the proposition which has been advanced that these people came from India, there would appear to be good grounds for that supposition, as shown by certain similarities of phrases and the resemblances which point to a migration through New Guinea, the people who established themselves in the northern part of Australia having evidently penetrated that country from the southern part of New Guinea, going afterwards south-west, and thus overspreading the continent of Australia. This, at any rate, is the idea of those who have looked into the question. Tradition certainly seems to point to the Australian aborigines coming from the north. Ridley (perhaps the chief authority amongst the many devoted missionaries and laymen who have lived amongst them and investigated the history and customs of the race) speaks of a tradition about the first landing of man on the north-west coast of Australia from Java. He says, moreover, "it has been shown out of their own mouths, from their songs and their cherished traditions, that they are by no means destitute of some qualities in which civilised men glory; such as the power of inventing tragic and sarcastic fiction, the thirst for religious mystery, stoical contempt of pain, and reverence for departed friends and ancestors. It may be affirmed, with some reason, that they have handed down with reverential care through many generations, a fragment of primeval revelation. The manner in which they have displayed these characteristics presents to us such a strange mixture of wisdom and folly, of elevating and degrading thoughts, of interesting and repulsive traditions, of pathetic and grotesque observances, that in order to account for the apparent contradictions we must have recourse to *the supposition of an ancient civilisation from which this race has fallen*, but of which it has *retained some memorials*." I need not now say more than to express my sincere pleasure at the full and careful treatment of this most important subject exhibited in the paper of Dr. Fraser. The poor aborigines have been for well-nigh a century hardly the better

for English civilisation. They have been despoiled, degraded, and neglected by the Anglo-Saxon race who occupy their lands. It is well that this paper has been introduced to the notice of the members of this Institute, if only to give new impetus and a new motive to the movement at the antipodes for more righteous and brotherly attention to the material and spiritual wants of our fellow-subjects, the aborigines of Australia.

The meeting was then adjourned.

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING PAPER.

BY THE REV. MYRON EELLS

(Of Pacific University, United States).

I have been very much interested in this paper, because it bears strongly on a subject on which I prepared a paper, which was read in 1885 (see *Transactions*, vol. xix.),—the bearing of the religious ideas of the natives on the unity of the race, and other principles of the Bible, —my paper having had reference to the natives of America, while this one refers to those of Australia. It seems evident from their geographical position, that, next to America, the islands of the Pacific Ocean are the most difficult of access by immigrants from that part of Asia where it is believed that Adam was created, and hence the most likely to be the centres of other human creations, if there were such. Hence, everything which tends to show that the inhabitants of these islands were formerly connected with that part of the human race which inhabits the Eastern continent is specially valuable. Realising this, and my interest in the subject having grown since I wrote that paper, I have, as opportunity offered, examined some works on several of those islands, in order to see how much their religion agrees with that of the Bible. Mr. A. W. Howitt, F.L.S., F.G.S., in a paper in the Smithsonian Report for 1883, on the Australian group relations, speaks of their belief in a Supreme Being, and their very great reverence for Him, even in pronouncing His name, and he gives this name in the languages of several of the tribes. W. B. Wildy, in a work on Australasia and the Oceanic region (p. 116), says that the Larrakeyahs and Woolnahs do not practise circumcision, but all the other tribes do; and that the custom is purely traditional. He adds that they are afraid of an evil spirit called Brawl; and that under the trees, up which they bury their dead, they will smooth down the grass in order to detect

any visitation of Brawl; also that before retiring at night, they take a light and hunt around, calling out "Brawl! Brawl!" as if to bring him from his hiding-place. These are the Northern Australians, very low in the scale of civilisation, wearing almost no clothes, eating roots, grubs, worms, the larvæ of ants, lizards and snakes, and practising cannibalism to some extent. Sir John Lubbock, in the Smithsonian Report for 1869, in a paper on the social and religious condition of the lower races of man, also speaks of the belief of the inhabitants of Australia in spirits and a kind of devil, who is spiteful and malevolent, but weak, and dangerous only in the dark. But the paper just read is a most valuable one, and I hope the author will follow up his studies on the subject much farther. There are some things spoken of in this paper which remind me of practices among some of the natives of America. In regard to the ideas of the natives of America about a mediator, and dancing as a mode of worship, I would refer to my paper (*Transactions*, vol. xix., pp. 313, 319). There are among the Indians in Washington Territory, in the north-western part of the United States, two sacred styles of worship practised, called respectively the Red Ta-mah-no-us and Black Ta-mah-no-us, or religious ceremonies. The former derives its name from the red paint with which they paint themselves during its ceremonies. It is by far the most common of the two kinds, is open to the public, and is the usual way which many of them have of occupying the stormy winter days and long evenings. It is often practised by a few persons, and at any time and place, though sometimes considerable preparation is made for it. Any person may engage in its ceremonies, who has obtained his ta-mah-no-us, or guardian spirit. In order to get this, a young man (or woman) goes into the woods alone, where he remains eight, ten, or twelve days, with little or nothing to eat, but during which time he washes himself constantly. While there his ta-mah-no-us is revealed to him in the shape of some animal, which ever after is sacred to him: that is, his guardian spirit dwells in this animal. The latter, or black ta-mah-no-us, takes its name from the black paint which is used, especially on the face, during its ceremonies. This is a secret society, with certain ceremonies, which are public, but the meaning of which they do not tell. The ceremonies of initiation and observance afterwards are only practised at some of the large gatherings. I have seen them but once, when they occupied six or eight days, but I have heard of their lasting two months. Their faces were painted black in various ways, in stripes or spots, or with a part or the whole

of it completely black. About the close of it, the candidates were washed for a long time. In fact, washing and purification constitute an important part of the initiatory ceremonies of both of these modes of worship, and also when a person becomes a medicine man. In both of these we see the period of eight or ten days mentioned in the paper just read, but more especially in the red ta-mah-no-us, whose object is to enable the candidate "to commune with the spirits," as the paper says (p. 159). In the latter, the secret society is plain, and the ceremonies are performed in great state, as in the Bora. Tradition says that this latter originated in British Columbia, in a mythological way. In the practice of the ceremonies of the red ta-mah-no-us, I have seen persons dance around a large fire, clothed with a red blanket, holding a stick in the hand, with face and eyes askance, so that I was forcibly reminded of an old witch with a wand in her hand. This stick was sacred, and the object of the performance was to purify the persons from sin. Singularly enough, however, the red paint is not considered as the symbol of evil, but of good. The tradition of the Skokomish Indians is that, long ago, when a previous race, the progenitors of the present one, dwelt here, the Klik-i-tat Indians of Central Washington came to Skokomish and engaged with those of Skokomish in a great game of gambling. The Klikitats who were painted red, won the game. In process of time, Dokibatl, a kind of deity, incarnate, came and changed the people into earth, the Skokomish Indians being changed into the hills on the west side of Hood's canal, which are of common clay colour, and the Klikitats being changed into hills on the east side, where is a bank of red clay, the remains of the red paint, which was on the Klikitats. To that place the Skokomish Indians go for the red paint, which they use in gambling and religious ceremonies, as they believe it to be an omen of good. The circle and sun mentioned in this paper also have their counterpart in America. The ancient civilised nations of Mexico and Peru, and also less civilised tribes, as the Natchez Indians of Louisiana, the Dakotas, whose sun dance is one of the most savage of their religious ceremonies, the Blackfeet, Clallams and Makahs of the northern part of the United States, and the Pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona, all worshipped the sun. Many of these people built temples to it, and there are remains of sacred places in the south-western part of the United States in circles, which are believed to be the ruins of ancient temples, and which have reminded me of

the circles mentioned in this paper. There is evidence also to believe that the Ancient Mound builders worshipped the sun.

BY MR. HASTINGS C. DENT, C.E., F.L.S.

There are many points in this important paper upon which I should like to write, but my stay in Australia was so short that though I ascertained a good deal, I must not do more than say that all I heard there is confirmed by the author. To study the links between distant nations or people as proved by any similar religious traditions as practices which they respectively hold, is a most valuable sphere of work. May I mention one point upon which the author seems to contradict himself, viz., the two passages on the second page of the paper where he denies "that religiousness is a thing of man's own invention," &c., and the allusion to the "red heifer" of the Israelites, offered "probably with some reference to the Egyptian ideas about this colour." There appears to be in this a tendency to state that the Hebrew records which we hold to be the inspired Word of God, adopted heathen customs. Is it not a much more reasonable—as well as a more lofty—view, to hold that the oral inspiration given to the primeval nations was the *true* origin of the degraded mythologies which we meet with in the most ancient religions? And that this oral inspiration was the preparation for the elaborate system of type and ritual revealed eventually to Moses, and by him reduced to writing. I would have liked the author, as he was dealing with the "religiousness of nations," to say something as to the capability of the Australian aborigines to understand and accept the Christian religion, and their receptivity as to civilisation, &c. I venture to suggest that had the author, with his wide experience, given us some information on this subject, the practical value of the paper would have been very considerably enhanced. I heard and have read much as to the great success of mission work among the natives, both by Roman Catholic and Anglican Missionaries, but had no opportunity of seeing it. But as regards capacity for civilisation, I met some black boys from Western Australia and the Northern Territory, ages from ten to thirteen years; they were travelling on board my steamer from Port Darwin to Brisbane and other parts of Queensland, so I had an opportunity of gauging their powers, &c. They were returning as servants to some miners who were going home after an unsuccessful hunt for gold.

The boys had been taken from the wild tribes, had had no more than a few months' intercourse with white men, yet could talk English well, were very intelligent, and sang English songs very prettily. From all I gathered in Australia (and I visited every part between Port Darwin, along Queensland, down to Adelaide) these aborigines,—reputed to be one of the lowest races of mankind,—appear to have in them all the powers with which man is endowed, and the rising generation is capable of being formed into respectable civilised and religious communities. Of course, from Port Darwin to Brisbane was the most available field for inquiry, as the natives there have not been so entirely “wiped out,” or, at least, are more easily reached than in New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia. In fact, from all I gathered, this appears to offer the greatest opportunities for success of all the foreign fields of mission work that I have seen.

Analogy (*d*), “the fish-shaped roarer,” which the author compares with the Chaldaean god, half man half fish, requires notice, as to the wide-spread relics of fish-worship. The god Vishnu (of India) is described as “incarnate, in the form of a *fish*, to recover the sacred books lost in the Deluge.” The fish was worshipped by the Cuthites or Phœnicians, and relics thereof appear abundantly in Ireland (in which country the round towers are perhaps the best known remains of this very early race). On one of the ancient and beautiful pre-Christian crosses at Kells, county Meath, I have lately seen a carving of six men on their knees worshipping a huge fish as big as themselves. When I was at Fuchau, on the Min river, in China, in October, 1886, I visited the Kushan (Buddhist) monastery, situated aloft in the seclusion of a mountain dell; there is here a huge tank or pond full of sacred fish, mostly perch, some of which are an enormous size. The worshippers at these shrines can, for a few “cash” (a cash is about 1-25th of a penny), buy a lot of biscuits, which they throw into the pond, and immediately the holy fish rise in hundreds to the surface and devour the offerings of the devotees.

The mention of fire worship in Analogy (*g*) is rather too brief. The author might at least have said that this is none other than the worship of Baal. Abundant traces thereof are preserved to this day in Ireland, in names of places or dedications of ancient temples to Cuthite demigods transformed into Christian saints, all of whom are now represented as having lived about the time of St. Patrick, but there yet remains a tradition at Glenda-

lough, co. Wicklow, that in ancient times the heathen priest used to ascend the fine round tower (which has been lately restored) and at sunrise called aloud the name of Baal four times, once from each of the four openings or windows at the summit of the tower, which face the cardinal points of the compass. (Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 26, &c., as to Baal among the Israelites.) Apart from the religious links of affinity between nations, and quite outside the limits of discussion of Mr. Fraser's paper, is the last word I would like to add, but it may perhaps be ruled "out of order." It is, however, an instance of how a link may be traced which has never been thought of. The case in point is the affinity of the Indians of Alaska with the Botocudos of Eastern Brazil. I had the opportunity of attending a recent meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, when a paper was read by Mr. Stearn on his explorations of the Rio Dôce in Brazil, and his sojourn among the Botocudos for a month. In the discussion, Mr. Colin Mackenzie (whom I met in Brazil in 1884) stated that he had traced the custom of the monstrous lip-disc worn by the Botocudos, from the eastern coast of Central Brazil, through the interior, by Central America, to the West Coast in California and thence up to Alaska, where the custom is also found to-day.

REPLY BY THE AUTHOR.

I have to thank the Chairman and those who have taken part in the discussion for their kind approbation of my paper. I may be allowed to state that it was written to combat the theory held by some ethnologists that our Australian blacks are a race distinct from the rest of mankind. Against this theory my argument is briefly this:—The blacks of Western Africa have certain rites and ceremonies, evidently of a religious and sacred character, through which young men have to pass at their opening manhood. The blacks of Australia have similar ceremonies, of a similar import, and in some particulars, identical with those of Africa; therefore these two races must have drawn their rites of initiation from a common origin and a common source, for it is impossible to believe that two races of mankind, now located so far from each other, and with no opportunities of contact for thousands of years bygone, should have, apart and of themselves, worked out the same beliefs by mere thinking.* My introductory remarks, to which Mr. Stephenson refers, were meant to say that man is found to have everywhere a share in the common religious instinct planted in him by God, and, it may be, in a common primitive revelation given by God. All mankind are therefore in this respect homogeneous; but if men were found anywhere who were void of this instinct, the mere use of the thinking faculty would not lead them to religious beliefs and acts of worship.

As to the "red heifer," I should have expressed my meaning more accurately if I had said the red colour of the heifer in the Mosaic ordinance had probably some reference to the notions about that colour which we find among the Hamite races, of which the early Egyptians were a part. I did not intend to say that any portion of the Mosaic ritual was borrowed from the Egyptians. To the white race black is the evil colour; to the black race white is the spirit-colour, and red is evil.

As to the analogies which may be drawn from Baal worship, I spoke of them as briefly as possible, because they are so well known in Britain.

* A valuable paper on "The Ethnology of the Pacific," by the Rev. S. J. Whitmee, F.R.G.S., vol. xiv., p. 16, tends to support this view.—Ed.

I may here be asked how I came to possess a full account of the Bora ceremonies, when the blacks hold them as sacred, and will not divulge them. So silent are they on this point that, so far as I know, no one had previously obtained, or at least published, full information about these ceremonies. Well, about sixty years ago it was the custom in this colony for the Government to give grants of Crown land of considerable extent to immigrant gentlemen who were in a position to occupy and improve the land. The father of a friend of mine got a grant in this way, and went to take possession. As I have explained in the paper itself, he was coming down the hill towards the spot where he intended to build his house, when a tribe of blacks camped there rushed off in alarm, taking him to be "Wunda," a spirit; but, reassured by his gestures, they came near, and finding him to resemble a chief of theirs, who had just died, they claimed him as one of themselves! His son, as might be expected, grew up on terms of intimacy with the blacks on the estate, and has always treated them with kindness; they will tell him anything. At my request he got a young black, who had just been initiated, to tell him all about the Bora. I have in various ways tested information thus given, and I am convinced that it is full and accurate.

In the month of September, 1888, there was some correspondence in the *Times* on the subject of Australian arithmetic. A distinguished authority there says, "One of the clearest indications of the low mental power of savages is that afforded by arithmetic." It seems to me that this statement is too general; for even, although the power of counting up to high numbers were wanting in a savage, it does not follow that his mental powers in general are low. Perception, cognition, and memory are mental powers; but if Sir John Lubbock's memory were weak and yet the cognitive and perceptive faculties remained strong and vigorous, it would be unjust to say that he is a man "of low mental power." Colonists who have been long familiar with the blacks of Australia, with one voice cry out against the assertion that they are of low mental power, and could give hundreds of instances to the contrary. A friend of mine who, in his boyhood, fifty years ago, was much in contact with the tribe in the midst of which his father had settled, has told me that two black boys, his companions, were "out-and-out good chess-players, taking plenty of time to study the moves, and showing great patience and calmness; these boys never went to school, and yet they could count up to a thousand." It is very clear that mental power was there, in these boys, but unseen and

dormant, like seed in the ground, until circumstances led to its being developed.*

Sir John Lubbock also says, "In no Australian language is there any word for 'five.'" This is not quite correct, for I know at least two large tribes (and there may be others that I do not know of), the one in Queensland and the other in the south-east of New South Wales, which have single words for "five," and in each case the word "five" is formed from the native word meaning "hand." As to the general question—the counting of numbers—I believe that a careful analysis of the numerals used by the Aryan family of languages will show that the base of them is *one, two, three*, and no more, *three* being in many religions a sacred and complete number; and that the other digits are expressed by words equivalent to one-three, hand, hand-and-one, hand-and-two, two-four, one-wanting two hands. If it should be proved that the Aryans, now the most civilized of races, originally said *one-three* for four, why should our Australians be considered "of low mental power" because they say *two-two* for four? Indeed, I am inclined to think that our Australians count in the more natural way, for they see nothing in or around them arranged in threes; the birds and beasts go in pairs; they themselves have two feet, two hands, two eyes, and so they count by twos. If the Australian blacks separated from the parent stock of mankind at a time when the common numeral system was still limited to *one, two*, or *one, two, three*, then their case is merely one of arrested development, their environment being unfavourable after separation; or if they ever had a developed system of composite numbers, these have fallen into disuse through the operation of a law of nature, for their wants are few and they live so much from hand to mouth that they had no need for high numbers. Their neighbours in Polynesia, who have plenty of fish to count, and bunches of bananas, and yams, and taro and cocoa-nuts, have developed many peculiar expressions to indicate the number of these, but our black fellow, who is well pleased when he is able to sing of the capture of "*wakulá, boolará bundarrá*" (one, two kangaroos), and whose only property is two

* On this point, Mr. Charles Wilson writes in the *Times*, Sept. 28, 1888: "The mental capacity of the aborigines is generally very much underrated. There are two schools at Moravian mission stations in Victoria, and the scholars are mostly aborigines; but the schools have passed their examinations as well as any other school in that colony, and the education given there is not inferior to that of our Board schools."—Ed.

or three spears, clubs, and boomerangs, does not require to use high numbers in his daily speech. Nevertheless, when it is necessary, he counts 10, 20, 30, 40, by closing and opening his hands, and then for higher numbers he contents himself with saying "Many, many."

For these and other reasons it is desirable that men of science in Britain should be careful in building theories upon what is said about our Australian aborigines; much of the information they have about them is unreliable, for it has not been gathered by competent observers or tested on scientific principles.

NOTE.

Professor Max-Müller, in his "Selected Essays" (volume ii., p. 27), makes the following interesting remarks:—

"Looking at a report sent home lately by the indefatigable Governor of New South Wales, Sir Hercules Robinson, I find the following description of the religious ideas of the Kamilarois, one of the most degraded tribes in the North-Western district of the colony:—

"'Bhaiami is regarded by them as the maker of all things. The name signifies "maker," or "cutter-out," from the verb *bhai*, *baialli*, *baia*. He is regarded as the rewarder and punisher of men according to their conduct. He sees all, and knows all, if not directly, through the subordinate deity *Turramûlan*, who presides at the *Bora*. *Bhaiami* is said to have been once on the earth. *Turramûlan* is mediator in all operations of *Bhaiami* upon man, and in all man's transactions with *Bhaiami*. *Turramûlan* means "leg on one side only," "one-legged."

"This description is given by the Rev. C. Greenway, and if there is any theological bias in it, let us make allowance for it. But there remains the fact that *Bhaiami*, their name for deity, comes from a root 'bhai,' to 'make,' to 'cut out,' and if we remember that hardly any of the names for deity, either among the Aryan or Semitic nations, comes from a root with so abstract a meaning, we shall admit, I think, that such reports as these should not be allowed to lie forgotten in the pigeon-holes of the Colonial Office or in the pages of a monthly journal."—ED.