

Peeps into the Past

ABORIGINES.

PART II.

(Written for the "Wingham Chronicle.")

(By J. E. W.)

The Kabook Tribe of aborigines which inhabited this district, were linguistically allied to and apparently a branch of that strong tribe that ranged over the Manning and Wal-lamba water sheds.

The boundaries of their "Towri"—tribal territory—seems to have been with definite geographicality, by adopting the watersheds of these two rivers. To the west and throughout the Hunter Valley roamed the powerful Kamilerol Tribe and its branches, and on the north was a distinct New England tribe. The Williams River blacks were apparently a branch of the Kamilerol, but the Port Stephens Tribe seems to have been distinct from either by their place names.

Their vocabulary was limited, and their sense of magnitude found expression in repetition. Thus the great precipice on Caries Peak became "Reegal Reegal." The treeless uplands of Eckford Downs was "Bean Bean." And the beautiful glades of Gummi became "Koomi Koomi" (hunting spears). Here periodically the natives of many tribes gathered to collect the quartz crystal prisms they so highly prized.

Their food supply consisted of everything that could run, fly, crawl, or swim. Almost anywhere one may find trees up which they climbed, by cutting steps with tomahawks, in search of 'possums. Their fish were largely obtained by throwing into the still pools the pounded up smart weed; this blinded the fish and brought them to the surface, where they became an easy prey. The bark of the cobakh, a species of acacia, was used in the same way to poison the fish. Their vegetable food was restricted. The edible pith of the roots of the large flagged water reed was greatly eaten (Wampoon). The soft turnip like root of young kuri-jong (Binagal) and the very palatable yam like root of the "towack" vine were in demand also. This vine grows on the edges of scrubs and penetrates many feet downwards; so

grows on the edges of scrubs and penetrates many feet downwards; so that the labor of digging with only yam sticks must have been enormous, as some of the holes are still extant.

Cannibalism was not customary, though cases are known. It occurred on the Monkerol, one of the A. A. Coy's, shepherds named Tongue being the victim. At Gangat there dwelt a fierce and truculent warrior named Morcy, feared by all the neighboring blacks. By chance an opportunity occurred; he was speared and buried only to be disinterred, his stomach cut open, and the fat extracted and eaten. The belief was that whoever partook of it would gain the strength and courage of the deceased.

With the aborigines every prominent spot was given a name, descriptive of some physical feature real or fanciful; the habitat of some bird, animal or tree; or commemorative of some past deed. Thus Boolan Boolan was the scene of an old time tribal battle; Giro the habitat of the satin bird; and Tigra the place of the ironbark.

Many of the following names and meanings have been supplied by Jack Cook, upon whom the ceremony of the Boombit was performed, many others, unfortunately, are forgotten; Bookan, Gloucester Buckets; Big Rock, Boolan Boolan; Waukivory, Big Battle; Boocy Willah, Boocy dead; Willah, small round stones in conglomerate—(buried stone); Mookenkakh (now Falkland), Mooken—bandicoot, kakh—place; Berrico, a rocky pool. In creek of same name. Terumbi, Gloucester River. Naby Naby, Large island in Barrington River. Cautheal—half moon. Kiripit (now Rawdon Vale)—small brown kangaroo rat. Kiripilet—The forks—junction of the Rawdon and Arundel Rivers with the Barrington. Cobakh—a variety of Aacia used for poisoning fish. Boraneal—round moon. A "bra" shaped valley, parish of Knowles and Boraneal. Kindag—buck 'possum. A lofty conical mountain, parish of Wawgan. Moppy—soft grass; a locality and a left branch of the Barrington River. Colwa—the eagle; locality and left branch of the Barrington, parish Womboln. Wattenbakh—(watten, smooth sandstone rocks; kakh, place) parish Boraneal. Urrimukka—near clouds; lofty mountain north of Cobakh Station; also lofty range to the head of Nowendoc River. Koomi Koomi—hunting spears; Gummi Plain, parish Mill. Pignabarney—(correctly Pingootnabarney)—pin-

(correctly Pingoatnabarney)—pingoot, the platypus; left hand branch of Little Manning. It is said that the backs once found a pingoot going overland from the Little Manning to the river now known as Pignabarney—hence the name. Koko—"a nut;" Ward's Creek a right hand branch of the Little Manning; parish Kornga. Kybook—"a nut;" Cherry-tree Creek, a right hand branch of Little Manning, parish Mill. Boom-bingaragist—"small eels"; right hand branch of Ward's Creek parish Koonga. Dewitt—"blowflies"; Upper Manning. Curri cabakh—Currica, mouth; bakh, place; place with a mouth. Kootry—"fighting or single sticks. Wutchumbakh—Wutchum, green wattle; bakh, place. Broiga—"Native companion"; Upper Barnard. Tigrak—"Ironbark"; Lower Barnard. Tuggerabakh—"Ironbark place." Koorabakh—"White cedar place"; Bowman Farm, Wallamba. Kerrihi—"Native bee"—Upper Manning. Cookumbakh—

"Figtree place"; Wallamba. Wangwauk—"Flying fox"; Wallamba.