

able are the miracles they perform. It is needless, however, to enlarge on the subject. I have related sufficient to prove the influence they have over the minds of the savages, their dupes. How they contrived to gain this influence appears extraordinary, as I am not aware that they possess one qualification superior to their neighbors;—but that they have gained it, and that they do their best to retain it, are equally true.

This is the extent of the influence of superstition on this people, and there I think it ceases; but here, also, must be noted a vague and partial idea which they appear to entertain of a state of being hereafter. I say partial, in as much as it applies but to one portion of the community, and that is to the young men, who, they say, upon taking their departure from this world, go to the moon, or to a place beyond it, where they remain in the midst of abundance of Kangaroos, upon which they have unlimited feasting, an idea conveying to the mind of an Australian a picture of the very essence of true felicity. But those dying old and infirm enjoy no such happiness;—on the earth, where they lived and died, there they remain, and conclude their career by furnishing a repast for the wild dog.

The traditions current amongst these people, like those of most other barbarous tribes, usually relate to some familiar object or event. Nevertheless, they generally contrive to confer on them an originality and marvellousness, not only amusing, but tending also in a great measure to enlighten us relative to the ideas and modes of thought of those from whom they are obtained. As specimens, let me relate one or two narrated to me by a native youth, as we lay around our bush fire; and in doing so, I shall endeavour to follow, as much as possible, the peculiar and simple language of my swarthy companion.

“The Kangaroo,” said he “now jumps far—very far; he jumps too like the frog, but it was not always so. A very long time ago it was not all jump, jump, jump. No, he then walked all the day, and when the black man was hungry, he did not run after the Kangaroo, as he now does, for the whole day, but arose from his fire, and knocked him down with his Waddie, and so he ate plenty, and without trouble. One day a Frog came up out of the River to take a walk and look at the country, and away he went, jump, jump, jump, and then sat down and looked about him, again he started, jump, jump, jump, and once more sat down in the glare of the Sun. And so he went on jumping and resting until he found himself in the midst of the Kangaroos, who were crawling about eating the grass with their fore paws to the ground, and noses very low, and backs very high. The Frog laughed when he saw the