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DISEASES, REMEDIES

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## D I S E A S E S

There were many diseases to which the aborigines were subject before the advent of the whites amongst them, not a few of their maladies being the result of over-indulgence in food; over-excitement in dancing or in connection with their various ceremonies; want of cleanliness, etc., etc.; all these causes producing the diseases resultant upon the unlimited indulgence or excitement appurtenant to them.

Ophthalmia was one of the most prevalent diseases, particularly amongst the Nor' West natives, and was mainly due to the great plague of flies which infest the districts during two-thirds of the year, and also to the action of wind and sun on the dry dust and sand, which produce what is known to the white settlers as "sandy blight."

"The poor winking people of New Holland," writes Dampier in 1688, "have their eyelids always half closed to keep the flies out of their eyes . . . so that from their infancy being thus annoyed with these insects, they do never open their eyes as other people, and therefore they cannot see far, unless they hold up their heads as if they were looking at somewhat over them."

Dampier visited the Nor' West coast in January, 1688, when the flies are most numerous, and the sun and wind most baleful in their effects, hence his description is by no means exaggerated.

At the present day, white and black alike undergo some form of eye trouble, and not infrequently white children and grown people have lost one or both eyes from sandy blight or flies. There is a greater number of blind or semi-blind natives in the North West than in the Southern parts of the State.

Amongst the other diseases common to the aborigines were dysentery, pneumonia, various skin diseases, diarrhoea, colds, headache, liver troubles, biliousness, sores or boils, rheumatism, inflammation, erysipelas and some minor ailments.

Idiocy was so rare amongst them that only one instance is recorded of an idior having been encountered. Brookman's party discovered him in the Northern Kimberley district. Temporary insanity is not unknown amongst them, but when a native suddenly becomes insane or violent or strange in his conduct, it is believed that he is under the influence of some powerful magic, which is working within him for good or evil. Should he become sane and quiet again, he is credited with magic powers, but if his violence and strangeness of demeanour continues for a considerable time, he generally commits some deed which brings upon him the anger of the camp. A man suffering from sunstroke is believed to be possessed of a spirit of magic of some kind which the natives cannot define. The making of many sorcerers has not unusually had as its beginning some temporary mental aberration, which on recovery they or their relatives have turned to account.

Deformities are not common, probably due to the fact that noticeably deformed children are killed at birth. R. Helms, in his travels with the Elder Exploring Expedition, stated that at Fraser Range he observed a woman "who had six perfect fingers on each hand, and the same number of toes on each foot. Not only were the limbs perfectly formed, but the corresponding metacarpal and metatarsal bones were also perfect." Inquiries recently conducted amongst some Fraser Range natives elicited the fact that some brothers and near relatives of the woman had also the same peculiar development.

Helms found a considerable number of deformities amongst the Victoria Desert tribe, and those near Fraser Range, almost all of which were the result of accident. He only remarked one instance where it seemed the defect was born with the person. Not a single deformed woman was met with during the whole of the exploring trip.

In 1865-6, an outbreak of small-pox occurred in the Nor' West, probably introduced by the Malays. Great numbers of the Ngeorla and Ngallooma tribes died of the malady. The natives said it came from the eastward - "weerajoo" (east), and they became so terrified

of the horrible and unknown disease that they fled from those of their tribe and family who contracted it, and for many months after this epidemic had run its course, bleached skeletons might be found in many of the deserted camps.

Ernest Giles mentions having met some natives at Rawlinson Range who had evidently had small-pox.

Measles was brought to Western Australia by the white settlers and destroyed great numbers of those who caught the malady, the natives plunging into the water at the acute stage of the disease, thus destroying any hope of their recovery. Whooping cough came with the 21st Regiment in the early Forties, some of the soldiers' children suffering from that complaint, and it also levied its toll upon the native inhabitants of Perth and the surrounding districts. Many of the Perth natives were thoroughly persuaded that the bugle, which they then heard for the first time, was the cause of their malady, and they went to the barracks to ask "why that fellow (the bugler) 'too-too' so much and make the blackfellow minditch (ill, sick)".

Except these diseases, which were introduced from outside, the natives had apparently no infectious diseases amongst them, unless ophthalmia and jip-jip (itch) could be called infectious. Before the settlement of the country by the whites, the natives were what might be called a long-lived race, for the first settlers encountered many native men and women of presumably eighty years of age and upwards. Balbuk, Joobaitch, Woolberr, Baaburgurt and many others were well over the seventies when they died. Ngalbaitch of Korrlup is a great-great-grandmother and was hale and hearty when I saw her two years ago, her great-great-grandson being however a half caste. In the Israelite Bay district a group of four living generations of natives shows that even in that so-called arid district the native inhabitants were long lived.

Amongst all the camps visited between Disaster Bay and Esperance, only one hermaphrodite was met with who belonged to the country east of Wallal, the Southern terminus of the Ninety Mile Beach.

At Le Grange Bay another native was met with whose body did not appear to have grown beyond childhood, his legs however being those of a very tall man. The trunk did not measure more than a foot in length, and was proportionately narrow. The legs were thin, but appeared of abnormal length compared with the body. The head and face, though small, were not unduly so. At the time of my visit the man was far gone in consumption, and is probably long since dead.

The albino aborigine who was exhibited some years ago, came from the North West district.

That "travellers' tales" are not unknown to the natives is shown by the statement of Monnop, a Victoria Plains district native, who made a droving journey through the Kimberley district, where he encountered "a native woman with four breasts!" Unfortunately Monnop's statement failed to receive confirmation from the white men whom he accompanied. Such deformities as babies born with lambs' tails, kangaroo paws instead of hands, etc., were instantly killed, as were also babies having any other pronounced birthmarks. The infant to whom the Broome district woman had given birth, and who had the markings of the curious fish caught and cut open by the mother, before the baby's birth, was killed, as all these deformities are generally supposed to be the result of evil magic practised on the mothers, or punishment for some offence which they have committed against the laws of their tribes. The mothers have not infrequently been killed either by their husbands or by some older member of the camp, in the belief that if they had not transgressed the babies would not have been so marked.

In a recent communication from Dr. R.R. Harvey of Norseman, it was stated that amongst the natives of that district there were some who had irregular patches of skin quite white on their bodies, and that this anomaly appeared to be characteristic of certain families there, some of whom had been nearly half white. Dr. Harvey also stated that having had occasion to exhume the body of a native woman some days after death, to his surprise, the whole, or almost the whole, of the epidermis was detached from the body, and her skin was white, just like our own. The black pigment was laid down in the epidermis, and there was none in the cutis below. So it would appear that the old tradition of the spirits or ghosts of all dead natives being white has some foundation in fact.

Jeebaitch furnished the following names for the various diseases prevalent amongst his people, the "Yabbaroo yocngar", (Guildford) :-

Jeerurt or Jeerdal'y	A film or cataract on the eyes.
Koonda	Festering sores or boils
Noojan-koonda	Squeezing the boils to extract the matter.
Koonjelup	Coughing from a cold in the chest
Katta-yinna-yeemba	Scurf in the head
Ngorrart	Covered with scabs or sores
Jip-jip	Itch
Beeda werrup (Veins or muscles no good)	Fainting or swooning
Ngolga mindaitch	Toothache
Durdal'y' werra (back no good)	Pains in the back
Dooljeen gunjat	A sprain
Burnart or burna	A cut
Nyeering	A cutaneous disease
Mai'er wakkain	Liver complaint
Goort mindaitch	Heart trouble
Koonga	Pains in the lower part of the back
Gobbul mindaitch	Stomach complaint

Wounds of all kinds, more or less severe, inflicted by spear, kailee or club, were amongst the constant ailments of the natives, as fights were always occurring.

The gum of the kardan or red gum tree (mahogany) was often used as a plaster for sores or wounds, and the leaves of the kardan were heated and rubbed on the affected parts, placed on sore eyes, and used for skin troubles.

Sand, mud and cold water baths, were all native remedies for feverish disorders.

Scarifying, or "cupping", friction or rough massage, kneading, rubbing or pressing the seat of pain were general remedies amongst the Guildford tribe.

The leaves of a species of stink plant were folded and twisted into a ball and placed in the ears for earache, and up the nostrils for colds in the head.

Dysentery and diarrhoea were sometimes cured by eating the gum of the kaldan tree; while liver troubles, biliousness, etc., were remedied by cooking and eating a little yorna or stump-tailed iguana.

The antiseptic qualities of banksia and other wood ashes for wounds, boils, etc., were known to the Southern natives. Certain fine ash was used as "powder" to prevent or cure chaffing in infants, and a sufferer from a severe attack of jip-jip often rolled in a bed of banksia ash to bring relief.

For headache, all tribes tied a band tightly round the head, or else requested and received a blow from a friendly wanna or club, which scarified the head and healed the pain. Pressure was also resorted to in cases of severe headache, the "curer" placing his foot on the forehead of the sick man, and pressing as much of his weight as the patient could bear.

Charming the sickness away was the general remedy for all troubles, the sorcerer massaging the affected part, taking out and burying the evil magic, and extracting some curative magic from his breast which he "injected" magically into the patient.



Booyer or tarramurra was the Swan district name for the magic white crystal which sorcerers often used in their administrations to the sick. The booyer was placed on the wound or seat of pain, and pressed hard as though it were pushed inside his body. Then the boylya blew upon it and immediately it disappeared inside the man. It was left there until the patient got better. Sometimes two or three days elapsed before he recovered, but if he died it was through the distant and hostile boylya who had sent the evil magic into him. On the patient's death, the booyer returned to its owner.

A Southern sorcerer will, in addition to his magic practices, sometimes bleed a patient by making an incision with a sharp flint near the temple or in the arm, rarely in the veins.

For severe toothache or abscess, an opening might be made in the jaw below the aching tooth, but whether this is an entirely native remedy is impossible to determine. Jobaitch stated that his granduncle, who was boylyaguttuk, cured Maiago of what was probably an abscess in the jaw, by bleeding.

Pains in the stomach were cured by the patient lying on his back and allowing some one to stand on his stomach, and press their weight upon it till he felt relief. Infants and little children suffering from stomach complaints were cured by their mothers placing hot ashes on the seat of pain, rubbing, pressing, or simply placing a layer of ashes over the stomach.

Wounds in the feet, inflicted by spear or cobbler fish, etc., were treated by putting the wound in the ashes or cinders and keeping it there as long as the charring could be borne.

Fevered patients frequently sat up to their necks in water, until the fever abated, thereby showing a knowledge of the "recently discovered" "cold water cure".

For snake bite the Guildford natives applied ligatures of the outer bark of the zamia above the wound, scarifying the bitten part with a kangaroo tooth or claw, or the point of a spear.

Sprained ankles were rubbed and pressed and warm ashes applied till the swelling subsided. The native sometimes kept the ankle surrounded by hot ashes. The sprain was also charmed by pressing out the evil magic and substituting healing magic, taken from the breast of the sorcerer.

A cure for prolonged insensibility is thus recorded in the "Perth Gazette" of 30th July, 1836 :- A native woman, who had been imprisoned for theft, was found one morning in a state of insensibility. The services of the Colonial Surgeon were at once requisitioned, but his efforts to restore animation were unavailing, and he held out little or no hope of the woman's recovery.

At the solicitation of her husband and several women of the tribe, the authorities allowed her to be carried away into the bush in order that her people might practise their own remedy upon her.

The insensible woman was forthwith carried into the bush, and buried up to her neck in the sand to restore the suspended animation, this treatment being successful, as the "Gazette" of the following week announced her recovery.

The Swan district natives regarded the gogomit or owls as the cause of their boils and skin eruptions, the bird being supposed to pierce the skin of the natives with its beak in the night time when they were asleep.

For rheumatism and other bodily pains, the leaves of a species of "penny royal" and also the leaves of a species of sand scrub were burnt, and the patient inhaled as much of the smoke as he could obtain.

Spearheads are extracted from the body, if a portion has been left which will give a grip or hold. If not they are left in the wound. The embedded portion if headed with flints invariably kills the man unless it can be extracted. When this is possible, the wood is grasped and pulled roughly out, the barbs or flints tearing the flesh in the process. The hole left by the wound is filled in with warm ashes and gum. Sometimes a bark ligature will keep the "plaster" of ashes and gum in place.

A Southern native, whose great toe had been torn off by a tree stump, placed the toe in the living embers, withdrawing it occasionally as the pain became too great to be borne. The process was repeated several times, the native stamping his foot on the ground, and grunting with mingled pain and satisfaction. The following morning he tied his toe with some ti-tree bark, and in a short time the wound was healed.

The barb of a spear, which had been in the body of a native for over four months was extracted by Dr. Wollaston in 1852. The spear had forced its way, through muscular action, from the chest just above the heart, to a point in the back just below the left shoulder. The wood was some four inches long and from half an inch to an inch thick. It had become smoothed and worn in its journey through the man's body. The native bore the operation without flinching, and was perfectly well in a few days.

An Albany district native who had had his leg broken by a spear, and had found the member mortifying, dug a hole in the earth sufficiently large to admit his leg, and deep enough to allow the wounded part to be on a level with the surface of the ground. The injured part was then surrounded with coals, the fires being kept replenished until the leg was burnt off. The charring checked the haemorrhage, and in a very short time the wound healed. Charring or cauterizing was often resorted to for serious and even trivial wounds in the limbs.

Bishop Salvado mentioned an extraordinary "native" cure in connection with tuberculous disease. A young native had been ploughing for about three weeks and at the end of this time, the Bishop ordered him to suspend his ploughing, having noticed that he was suffering from chest trouble. The native stopped but unwillingly, as he saw the other natives were getting ahead of him in his ploughing. After a few days, continuing to spit blood, he told the bishop he would be all right if he were allowed to go hunting horses. The native, after hunting for three or four days, ceased to spit blood and returned again to his ploughing.

That curious and most unaccountable, and in the case of the natives, incurable malady called nostalgia or home sickness, is thus alluded to by Bishop Salvado in a Report sent to the Government in the early 60's :- "A strong and healthy young native, who never in his life knew what strong liquors or European vices were, is admitted into a private house, mission or establishment. For some time he goes on well, is gay and full of life, but in a few months or perhaps a couple of years a fatal melancholy takes possession of him. Being asked what is the matter with him he answers "Nothing." "Do you feel sick?" "No, sir." "Do you suffer any pain?" "No, sir," "Why are you not so cheerful as before?" "I do not know." He takes his meals as regularly as ever, he has no fever, yet he daily and almost at sight loses his flesh, strength and health. What is the technical name of such a disease? Perhaps consumption, perhaps liver complaint. Let it be so, but is there no remedy for such diseases? Yes, there are, Are there no preventatives of their causes? there are, but nevertheless, that native died shortly after."

It is maintained by some that the post mortem appearance of natives who have died from consumption differs from those of Europeans. However that may be, it is certain that the distressing cough which is the sad accompaniment of the European complaint is absent in the natives. The phlegm is accompanied with blood but comes up freely without the exertion and straining which is usual amongst white consumptives. The two consumptives whom I saw at Southern Cross and La Grange Bay spat blood and phlegm frequently, but there was no cough with the expectorations. One of the main causes of the disease in the days before the white men, was that of sleeping on wet ground after an exciting and overheating series of ceremonies. The natives had no remedies for this disease, and occasionally one or more of their members died from "spitting blood", and all knew that when this stage was reached in the disease, the case was hopeless. The "rattling" of the respiratory organs occurred only a day or two before death.

Should wounds fester after the gum and ashes have been applied, these are removed and a fresh mixture put in.

Protruding bowels have been replaced and the hole filled in with gum and ashes, and bound with bark and fibre.

The "lancet" used for opening boils, etc., may be a sharp flint or kangaroo bone sharpened to a point; with these they scarify wounds, probe gatherings and perform other operations.

It is the sorcerer who generally massages the wound or seat of pain. All the while the friction is being gone through, the sorcerer blows, puffs and hisses in much the same manner as an energetic groom indulges in when rubbing down a favourite horse. He ceases work at irregular intervals in order to throw off the magic which he is so strenuously extracting from the patient. I endured tortures in having a badly sprained ankle "treated" by Woolberr, so that I should ascertain the sorcerer's methods in curing sprains. He rubbed, squeezed, pinched and pulled the swollen flesh, now and again taking handfuls of the evil magic to the foot of a gum tree and burying it, having made a hole with his toe to receive it. On his return from the tree he lightly pinched his breast and pressed the healing magic into the sprain, continuing the process until I could no further endure it, when I said falsely that "I was much better",

Skin diseases are mainly traceable to continuous over feeding during a season of plenty, to an exclusive fish or flesh diet, and to the absence at these times of vegetables. What might be called scurvy will frequently be found amongst them owing to this circumstance. Grease and red ochre will often be rubbed over their bodies when covered with sores, but they all recognise that a change of diet causes the disease to disappear, and hence when a native finds himself suffering from this disorder he generally pays a visit to some of his relatives whose camping ground will afford him the requisite change of diet.

Woorgomitch was the name Joobaitch applied to a species of sensitive plant which possesses a pungent smell like garlic. When suffering from headache, or prostration from some unknown cause, they frequently made a bed of woorgomitch and lay upon it until they had inhaled all the odour of the fresh plants.

In mud baths the native buried himself up to the chin in soft mud, remaining in his bath for some considerable time. Probably rheumatic fever was one of the complaints cured by these mud baths.

In places where water was not plentiful, the sorcerer sometimes filled his mouth with water and spurted it over the patient's body, back and front. He then gathered some in his hands and threw it over the sick man's head and breast. The fever patient was then laid on his back and the sorcerer performed various "charmings", flicking thumbs and forefingers together, and groaning as if the spirit of the fever was wrestling with him instead of his patient, and performing many other acts, some of which are invented on the spur of the moment, others being traditional prescriptions for such maladies. In almost all cases however, the fever patients are forbidden animal food while the fever lasts.

A dropsical native has now and then been met with, but the disease has generally been contracted by those who come in touch with civilisation, for as soon as the native returns for a period to the bush, the malady disappears.

In many of their diseases, particularly that of consumption, they know when the end is near, and it is then that the custom of absorbing the small spark of life in the dying man takes place in many of the tribes. If a native has been under the care of a settler by whom he was employed, and they learn of his illness, his people insist upon his return to the bush, in order that his spirit may be absorbed by one of his relatives, or perhaps they desire that the man should die upon his own ground where his fathers died before him, and from which his spirit will find its way to the home of the dead.

A boy at the Beagle Bay Roman Catholic Mission fell from a tree and was injured internally. "Water running down there," he said, pointing to his throat. A priest brought the boy to his room and tended him during the day. Towards evening, having had occasion to leave the room for a moment, he was horrified on his return to see a crowd of natives rushing towards the room where the boy lay. Before the priest could reach the boy, one of the natives, a big athletic man, had caught the dying boy in his arms and crushing him to his breast, extinguished the little spark of life that was in him. This was done, the natives said, not only to absorb the boy's spirit and so acquire additional strength, but also to prevent the spirit from entering into an enemy's body and by that means injuring his own family. The man who had crushed the life from the boy bore the "elder brother" relationship to him.

If much bleeding ensues from a wound in the body, fibre or hair string cords are tied above and below the wound to stop the bleeding and if this is not efficacious, the wound may be cauterized in the rough method already described.

Many of the Southern natives, when suffering from feverish colds, built little fires all round them, unconsciously inducing perspiration by this method, besides keeping their body at a uniform heat.

They have often also made a fire in a hollow, when perhaps suffering from kidney complaint, and when the embers had died out, the sick person sat or reclined on the hot sand, covering himself with more warm sand. Here he remained until the sand cooled, or the pains subsided. Sorcerers sometimes sucked the diseased parts, but only if the pain was inward and the surface of the skin unbroken. It has been stated that they have occasionally sucked a wound caused by snake bite, but the natives interrogated say that this is not true. Rheumatic pains were sometimes cured by the *mulgarguttuk* sucking the part affected, also in severe headaches, the *mulgarguttuk* will frequently suck the forehead or temples of the patient. In sucking the affected part, the native sorcerer has been known to draw out green blood and spume,

then black blood, continuing the process until the blood came out clear, when he desisted, knowing that the patient would recover quickly.

In the Murray district, a man suffering from headache sometimes obtains a rush (batta) which he thrusts up his nostrils one after the other, in order to induce sneezing, when the bulyar or mulgar is expelled with the sneeze.

The whirlwind, called booloort in the Cape district, is supposed to make the natives katta waggain (head no good), but only the sorcerers can heal those headaches.

A broken leg was often wrapped round with a piece of opossum or kangaroo skin, and a short stick was used as a sort of tourniquet or to keep the leg straight, thus serving the purpose of a splint. String of kangaroo tail sinew was wound round and round the bandage. The string was occasionally undone by the sick man's women or mother, together with the mulgarguttuk, and the wound examined. The wounded man helped himself along with a wanna until his leg was healed.

A broken thigh might be roughly set but it invariably left lameness behind from the rude surgery.

If the hand became broken beyond healing, the Southern natives tied the wrist lightly and allowed the hand to rot off, and as soon as it rotted off it was buried. The stump might or might not be charred after the hand fell off. If a finger was very much broken they chopped it off with the kojja, the mother or some female relative keeping the finger in her goota (bag) until the stump was healed. The finger was then buried.

As regards their belief in magical healing, one or two instances will suffice to show the strength of that belief. Yocrin, Baaburgurt's mother, was supposed to have been bitten by a venomous snake when she was a young girl and her demmap (grand uncle) Waggeen, who was mulgarguttuk, sucked the wound and drew the snake that had bitten her right out of her body, when she recovered at once. Waggeen was Ballaruk, Yocrin being Tondarup. Baaburgurt, who had an abnormally large mouth, even for a native, once inadvertently swallowed a goonok



(species of crayfish) while drinking, and was being rapidly choked when his demmap Doobee, a powerful mulgarguttuk, came running over to him, and pulled the goonok out of his ear! Doobee's country was south of the Capel.

Nembuk, a Vasse native, had broken one of the native laws, and a mulgarguttuk named Yoodeen changed himself into a walja (eaglehawk) and went up into the clouds. When he got right above Nembuk, he threw a little kooreer (small round stone like a marble) down upon her and it went inside her while she lay asleep. When she awoke she was katta waggain ("cranky") and then her feet got burnt and the soles dropped off. Her feet got better after the soles came off, but then her throat got bad and she threw up blood from the place where the kooreer had hit her and very soon died.

When the Southern Cross natives speared a man and saw him fall and lie still where he had fallen, to ensure his being dead they went over to him and tickles him in the groin or in the ribs. If he laughed or moved or showed any signs of life they at once despatched him. They never thought of feeling his heart for signs of life. Sometimes the fallen man was not killed and if he could hold his breath and was insensible to tickling, his enemies soon moved away convinced of his death, and as soon as they were out of sight he rose and went to his own country. Some Southern illnesses were supposed to come from the wind and the water, but in what manner was not discovered.

"Maata windoop" was the Murray district term applied to a bad leg which was allowed to rot away, the owner not feeling valiant enough to burn it off.

Leeches were put on bad legs or sores by the Bibbulmun natives in order to draw the bad matter from sore or wound. They also applied the liver oil of the stingaree fish to sores and bad wounds, but oil and grease or fat of some kind, mixed with gum, ashes or red ochre, was in general use for this purpose.

Amongst Balbuk's people, for snake bite they sometimes speared the leg right through, just above the bite, and let it bleed for some time. Balbuk states that her people only sucked a snake wound after they had seen the white people do it, and not then unless they were near a waterhole where they could rinse their mouths frequently.

Katta burnain was the Swan district term for scarifying the temple or forehead in cases of severe headache.

Bolgar eeja - sweating the fever out. The Swan people made a hollow and put a big fire into it to make the sand and earth very hot. As soon as it was considered sufficiently heated, they took the fire out, and put gum boughs or the leaves and boughs of some other tree in the warm hollow. The fever patient sat or lay upon these and "sweated" the sickness out.

Wounds among the Perth people were generally left to heal of themselves. In the case of a broken arm or leg however, a piece of wood was sometimes inserted in the marrow, and tied round with zamia leaves, the splint being put inside the bone instead of round it.

There was no remedy in the Swan district for bleeding from the lungs, but sometimes a friend or relative of the sick man pressed his foot on the throat to try and stop the haemorrhage, which he did as long as the patient could stand the pressure.

The value of leeches was also known to the Swan people.

Balbuk stated that there were very few diseases amongst them before the whites came to the country. An old woman named Jallaban, a Didarruk, was great-grandmother, yet her hair remained quite black, and was growing when her children's hair was grey.

In the Victoria Plains district, natives suffering from colds chewed the bark of the tuart tree, or lay between two fires. The sorcerers' remedies, were, however, the principal "cures" in this district.

The Gingin people occasionally used rough splints for broken limbs, but the boolya (sorcerer) generally sucked the

affected parts, drawing out stones, blood or whatever ~~what~~ was supposed to have caused the sickness. "Koordeeng'obin" was a lump (fly bite) coming on the eyelid. The sorcerer removed this by taking some magic from his breast and putting it on the eyelid. Brain trouble was also treated by the sorcerer in the usual manner, but if the patient became violent or dangerous, he was generally killed.

The Gingin sorcerers sometimes opened a vein in the arm and bled the patient copiously. The arm was then tied up with wattle bark and kangaroo sinew, and kept fastened until the vein closed. Chest, legs, thighs and arms are frequently tied up when speared. The fat of snakes, opossums or long-tailed iguanas was used as healing oil and rubbed on the affected parts. The Gingin men cut their own jaws to relieve severe toothache or abscesses.

Rheumatism was not common in the Gingin country, the district being too dry. Walburning (charming) was the only remedy for this and for walyal (lung) disease.

All wounds were treated in the same manner, by rubbing, binding the wound with paperbark, and occasionally squeezing the bad matter which had accumulated.

Liver complaints were charmed, the boolyaguttuk also sometimes sucking the part. Fever cases were left to run their own course, the patient drinking water indiscriminately during the progress of the fever. He recovered or died according to the strength of his constitution.

The old Gingin natives were also aware that excessive perspiration meant recovery, and it was at this period that the local boolyaguttuk took the patients under his care. All fever patients appear to have been rubbed with grease and wilgee when they were well on the road to recovery. Woolberr stated that this method always made them gwabba (good, or well).

The remedies of the Murchison district natives were dependent upon the products of their country, together with the ministrations of their sorcerers.

For bad colds they steeped the leaves of a species of peppermint tree in water and then drank the decoction. They also used the leaves of the kokkareea tree for the same malady.

A little creeping plant, (*Euphorbia drummondii*), in colour a faded red, grows in the Murchison district, and the natives have found that the plant is an excellent blood purifier, and eat it during the whole time it is in season. White settlers have used decoctions of this plant as a tonic.

The natives also chewed the chips and bark of a species of pine, or burnt them and inhaled the odour in cases of cold in head or chest, or slight feverishness.

The roots of a certain plant, called by the Murchison natives *thoocoomarree*, were eaten, or pounded and mixed with cold water and drunk in cases of sickness arising from stomach or liver disorders. They frequently carried these roots about with them so as to have them handy in cases of sickness. Having learnt the art of boiling from the white people, the roots are now boiled and the liquid drunk.

Certain species of shrubs and trees, will, when broken or cut, exhude a milky substance which the natives apply to sores, cuts or wounds. The bark and milky juice of the *Alstonia verticillata*, is used in the districts where it grows.

A species of eucalyptus gum is made into a plaster, with the help of ashes and grease, and applied to wounds etc.

The Northampton district natives have three species of magic pearlshell which they apply to curing or causing sickness. All these shells are magically elastic. The dibbooroo shell is pulled out towards the patients and then drawn back towards the sorcerer, bringing the evil magic with it. The sorcerer then spits out the magic which is supposed to have come to him from the patient. The thaamura shell is round shaped, the third species being oval. All are similarly used.

Mundhonga, a Northampton district native, cured a white infant of some internal malady by sucking the affected part, from which he drew nearly an eggcupful of blood and matter. The infant had a lump just underneath its right ribs, and this lump entirely disappeared after Mundhonga had used his native remedy. Several white people vouched for the truth of this statement.

The Northampton district people called stomach complaint kallajaroo, headache - muggamooroo, hip complaint (probably rheumatism) - woola ngagga kalaj'jirbee, lung trouble - ngoo-bana wilgarra, and colds - woondooroo. Bóoldha (magic) and suction were the principal remedies, together with those already mentioned.

In the Yuin district, hot ashes appears to have been the universal panacea for ailments, wounds, etc., also the services of the mobburn or sorcerer.

A Gascoyne native had been speared in the lower part of the leg. From some cause or other the wound mortified and the foot and leg gradually rotted away. At length the stench from the rotting flesh became so unbearable that the native decided to burn the limb off. He placed his leg full length on the ground, a hollow was dug beneath the part which was to be burnt (the original wound) and little mounds of sand and clay were placed on the sound part of the leg so that it should not get burnt. A fire was then lighted in the hollow space, and some more fire was put on top of the limb, so that the burning should take place quickly. When the native judged that the bone was sufficiently charred, the fire was removed and a very light blow severed the bone.

This native lived for many years on the Gascoyne; he had been a young man there when the accident happened. He propelled himself along with the aid of a long pole which he managed most dexterously. He continued to be friendly with the man who had speared him.

The natives will often apply a firestick to that portion of their bodies, legs or arms etc., which may have contracted rheumatism and occasionally they cover the affected limb with hot sand. Wet sand baths were used for venereal diseases and proved effective remedies. They set broken arms or legs with bark and the string of bark fibre which they tied lightly round the broken part. They did not use slings, but a broken arm was always held in position by the other hand.

NATIVE DISEASES.

Cornally states that when natives had a virulent attack of venereal disease (which he says was prevalent amongst them in their wild state and where no white men had penetrated), the men and women buried themselves up to the neck in warm wet sand, remaining there for days at a time and only coming out of their sand bath at night. When they finally emerged from the bath they were cured of the disease, which they called koo'-ar'-roo.

Cornally noticed this disease more in the coastal tribes than amongst the eastern natives and he has seen little children born with the disease and who were unable to walk properly with it. Wet warm sand was applied to the child, who in severe cases was given an entire sandbath. Children frequently died of the disease.

A certain kind of wood was burnt when a child was born which produced an ash as fine as powder, and with this fine ash the inner joints of the baby were sprinkled, in just the same way as Fuller's earth is applied to a white child, the ash being equally as fine as the Fuller's earth. The women continued to sprinkle the baby with the ash until the grease and charcoal were applied, when the powder was discarded.

A white contributor supplied the following information respecting some tribes on the Gascoyne river :-

A man's wife was sick, and before going for the sorcerer who lived a little distance away, he pulled several hairs from his pubes, under his armpits, and from his beard, and threw them at the sick woman. He then brought the sorcerer, who massaged her chest and belly, working downwards towards her womb. Filling his hands with the magic he was taking out of the woman, the sorcerer took it over to a tree, at the foot of which he buried it, repeating the process several times. When the white witness requested him to show his hands, he found them covered with blood and spume. All the time the sorcerer worked at the patient he made a clicking noise which appeared to come from his chest, and although the white man who watched the incident caused the sorcerer's tongue to be held out by another native, the clicking noise still continued.

The same contributor stated that women use their own urine for sores, wounds, neuralgia, etc., and when a man is wounded, an old woman will sometimes urinate on the affected part.

Nganda is the name applied to a skin disease which affects many of the Injeebandee natives (Tableland district), their bodies being covered with sores. They have no remedy except rolling the body in dust, sand or ashes at frequent intervals.

A sort of "scale" was prevalent amongst the Injeebandees, and colds and chest troubles were frequent. Small-pox, introduced from the eastward in the 60's carried off numbers of victims, and from that time every epidemic was supposed to have come from eerajoo - east.

Boolga, a species of red earth, was eaten in cases of stomach trouble. Another remedy was a kind of briony, a creeper bearing red berries. They wound this round and round their heads or stomachs, or wherever the seat of pain was. Milleeka-biddee was the native name of the creeper. Bukkararra, a species of stink plant was used for colds and earache, the leaf being folded and twisted into a ball and placed in the ears or up the nostrils.



Hot ashes, and the young tender shoots of a species of eucalyptus were the principal remedies used by the Ballamongerry (Sherlock River) natives. The leaves were bruised and applied to the seat of pain. Rheumatism, skin diseases, lung troubles and sore eyes were the chief diseases in this district. The women applied the bruised eucalyptus leaves to sore eyes, and also heated their finger and thumb and applied the hot members to the eyes. Hot ashes relieved stomach disorders. After the birth of her child, a Ballamongerry woman will not infrequently rub her body all over with grease and charcoal which she says brings back her strength and enables her to continue her journey, if the family are on the march, or collect the day's supply of vegetable foods.

The Nichol Bay tribes roughly amputated a wounded limb with a piece of sharp flint, charring the stump to prevent haemorrhage.

Some members of tribes, both north and south, showed a certain primitive knowledge of bone setting. All these were however the sorcerers of the tribes.

In the Roeburne district little babies and very young children frequently suffer from an eruption of sores which appear principally under their armpits, between their legs, and on their private parts. Hot ashes of certain woods and grease are all the remedies applied.

The Broome, Derby, Beagle Bay and Sunday Island natives use blood to cure fish or insect stings. A brother-in-law will make a small opening in his arm, and drop the blood upon the sting. The blood coagulates, and when removed, brings the sting away with it.

The Broome and Beagle Bay natives had many names for the various ailments which affected them, amongst which were :- Jool'ngoor or joorngur (boils on legs); jee'bilbil (lumps or sores breaking out on parts of the body, similar to what is called "Barcoo rot"); yeega (sores); koojeebee, neemee ee' bardik (sore eyes and bunged eyes); neelirr eegalladee (tooth-

ache); nalma yoogurdik (headache); ngaggainboo (vomiting); ngang'oor dardallin (stomachache); den'ga eebardik (swollen jaw or abscess); tchabboo-tchabboo (itch); goonbee (diarrhoea or dysentery); walmbing (a kind of chicken- or small-pox, introduced from eastward or north eastward); yingaraa ming'ara lanberr (spear or lanjee (boomerang) wounds); baggar mindamoo ( a lanjee wound right through the arm); bal'ngan'jinna, nan'mooroo (thigh wounds); and boorilya neemee-ngurra (bad eyes.)

Koobeejee or bunged eyes were cured by the application of the heated finger and thumb to the eyes. Jool'ngoer, yeega, and jee'hilbil were cured by sea bathing. Goonbee was supposed to have been brought from Yalmban (south) and only jalngangooroo (sorcerers) could cure it by taking the mirrooroo (magic) out of the patient. Sorcerers were not generally successful in curing this complaint, for many natives died of it. Neelirr eegal-ladee was endured until the native could pull out his tooth. Nalma yoogurdik was remedied by tying a band round the head; the band may belong to one of the sick man's women. In ngangoor dardallin the only remedy consisted in the extraction of all the entrails by the jalngangooroo, who cleaned them and put them back again without showing any scars. This method is called maa'boo in'moong'ai - taking out the bad parts and making the patient well. Sea bathing was also the remedy - the only one for walmbing.

Leo'rumba (birds down) was inserted into open wounds to stop the bleeding. Wounds in the arms or legs were tied up with string or with the wondongoo (forehead band.)

The jalngangooroo cured all diseases. He drew blood from the body by suction or crystal, inserting the latter magically into the body and drawing it out covered with bad blood. He also drew forth magic pieces of stick, stone, string, etc., from the seat of pain in body or legs and put other magic in their place.

While he is performing his healing, whether it is the cleansing of the ngangoor dardallin or extracting or inserting the magic, he sings the evil magic away, the song being generally an assurance that the sickness is going far away etc. He leaves no scars whatever in any wound he makes. Should the magic be a string or rope which some enemy has inserted into the sick man's body, it will sometimes "break" when being magically drawn out by the jalngangoorco, who at once says, "yangurgal burra (we'll lose him), baaloo eegalladee (the string or wood has broken)." The man soon dies when this happens.

A certain oil plant, called by the Northern Kimberley natives koorima, is burnt by the natives, who inhale the fumes when sick. The wood resembles the sandalwood but contains more oil.

The Sunday Island natives also made use of a few simple remedies as well as the ministrations of their sorcerers, whose services were not generally called in unless in cases of serious illness. For pains in the head or body, gum leaves were ground or mashed up with water and put on the parts affected; for colds and sore throat a species of wild thyme was steeped in water and the mixture drunk. Wounds were generally bound up, gum leaves being sometimes applied. The usual remedy for sore eyes - the application of the heated thumb and forefinger - was practised at Sunday Island, and for fish and fly stings, the dropping of blood on the sting was the remedy.

These represent most of the known diseases and remedies amongst the Western aborigines.

TuradaBarduwonga tribeDISEASES, REMEDIES

Kurgala	Cold
Turoynba	Headache
Inyari dala	
Inyari dauani	Itch
Yurdiani	A kind of scurvy
Biga derga	Sore leg
Yörgörö	Sore or boil

The only remedy appears to be yirga = hot ashes.

The mobarn (magic)

Remedies for Illness, Southern Tribes

Bēn - roots of tocourt, nammern and warnt (sp. of eucalyptus) are used in cases of dysentery. The bēn is beaten up with wanna (digging stick) or mill stone, and then heated slightly at a fire, When well heated it is put into water and drunk by the patient.

Yocern - stump-tailed lizard - is cooked and eaten as a purgative.

Mēn - mungart (jamwood gum) is also used as a purgative, but marri and other eucalyptus gum is a cure for diarrhoea and dysentery in the early stages of these complaints.