

# THE SPEECH OF THE TASMANIAN ABORIGINES.

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## I.—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The reconstruction of the speech of the extinct Tasmanian Aborigines seems at first almost impossible, owing to the paucity and dubiousness of the records we possess; but after careful research we find that, though the records are scanty, yet they are fairly ample, considering the comparatively small number of the constituent parts of the language, and a reasonable degree of probability can be attained by a patient study of the material available.

As we proceed in our investigation, we find that the subject opens up most interesting avenues of thought, and promises to lead to important results in the domains of philology, ethnology, and anthropology. To exhaust it would require the labour of years; but it is possible and expedient to formulate a working theory and submit it to competent criticism, and this is what I now venture to do.

Before entering upon this working theory, it will be advisable to define the scope of the present investigation.

As a trained philologist, I am well aware of the classification of the languages of mankind, and have a working knowledge of a certain number of them; but I find the characteristics of the Tasmanian speech so primitive and unstable, that I cannot see my way to enrol it in any of the classes given by the text-books.

It might be called a root-isolating language, akin to the Chinese, but for the fact that its roots are liable to variation, within certain limits, not merely in the speech of different tribes or families, but even in the usage of

any individual speaker. Moreover, a root may have a certain meaning in one family and apparently a quite different meaning in the other, and phonetic changes seem to have been subject to accident rather than to phonetic laws. Of course, we are not bound to admit the existence of accidents, and we may reasonably assume that a law may be found, if we only will or can go deep enough to find it.

To find the law underlying the phenomena of the Tasmanian speech is the object of the present investigation.

Again, it has been suggested that this speech is akin to that of the Australian Continent or some parts of it, or to that of the South Sea Islands, or to that of the Andaman Islands, and on these assumptions, theories of ethnological affinity have been based.

Now, a scientific opinion on this must be founded on the knowledge of all the speeches in question, and is not within the scope of our present study, not only from want of sufficient knowledge, but also because of its extent and practical uncertainty. The similarity of speech between two distant races or tribes does not justify even a presumption of ethnological affinity, except in so far as we may assume the essential uniformity of psychological and physiological processes in all human beings. Still, on the latter assumption we may establish analogies, provided we can find the speakers of the different languages to be at the same stage of mental development.

Finally, the anthropological aspect of our subject claims our attention, because the evidence of the available records of the Tasmanian speech seems to show that those that used it represented the primitive, or at least very early, stage of human thought and speech. Moreover, it shows that however primitive their thought and speech were, they were of the same kind as those of all other races of which we have any knowledge.

It seems clear, then, that we must restrict our present researches to the Tasmanian speech; and even here we find a larger field than at first we should expect, and are therefore compelled to subdivide it, in order to formulate a reasonably complete statement of each part.

Practically all the available material is contained in H. Ling Roth's work, "The Aborigines of Tasmania" (Halifax, 1899), supplemented by H. De Charency's "Recherches sur les Dialectes Tasmaniens" (Alençon, 1880). A comparison of H. Ling Roth's work with the sources of his information proves that his work may safely be taken as a reliable standard of reference, as far as the main facts are concerned; the misprints and errors of transcription are comparatively few in number and easily corrected. We shall therefore be able to quote chiefly from that book.

De Charency simply gives a list of words taken chiefly from French authors.

Latham (1) and Müller (2) have dealt with the Tasmanian speech, but I purposely postpone the study of their theories until I have completed the elaboration of my own. I am familiar with the usual views on the subject of their works, and, on the other hand, do not wish to run the risk of unconscious bias in favour of any particular view until I have thoroughly investigated the original sources of information.

Taking, then, H. Ling Roth's book as our guide, we find that there are certainly several dialects of the Tasmanian language, and that these dialects are assignable to fairly definite geographical regions. The number of these dialects is difficult to ascertain; but on broad lines we can easily distinguish two, spoken in regions which are separated by mountains and other obstacles, viz., the Western and North-Western speech on the one hand, and the Eastern and Southern on the other. The records of the former are much scantier than those of the latter, and of these, more material is definitely assigned to the East Coast than to the region of the River Derwent.

We shall therefore begin our scrutiny with the records of the Eastern speech, then take those of the Southern, and finally those of the Western and North-Western dialects.

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(1) G. R. Latham, *Elements of Comparative Philology*, (London, 1862).

(2) Fried. Müller, *Grundriss der Sprachwissenschaft* (Vienna, 1876).

First, however, we must briefly refer to the characteristics of the records themselves. It is evident that the original writers of these records had no special training for this work. Many of them were men of considerable scientific attainments, but there was no specialist in philology among them, and even if there had been, the science of Phonology, indeed that of Comparative Philology itself, had not in their time emerged from mere empiricism to the rudiments of strictly logical treatment.

Again, some of the recorders were French, one was a Scandinavian, others were natives of different parts of the United Kingdom, and each of these recorded what he thought he heard and according to the way he tried to imitate the Tasmanian words. When we add to these causes of uncertainty the circumstances that orthography was not always a point of excellence in those days, we realise some of the difficulties attending our examination of the records. Still, some of these difficulties are not as great as one would expect. After all, the spelling was to a certain extent phonetic, and by pronouncing the Tasmanian words as if they were English, and comparing them with similar words of kindred meaning, we soon learn to fix the actual sounds with some certainty.

There is yet another difficulty with those records. When vocabularies and lists of phrases were beginning to be compiled, the influence of the white invaders of Tasmania had been active for about thirty years, and had almost completely destroyed the original conditions of the life of the Aborigines. The survivors had been collected, and their various dialects had been mutilated, and amalgamated into a sort of "lingua franca" made up of convenient native words and colloquial and technical English terms. Still, it is possible to pick out words characteristic of certain dialects, just as we could determine the Attic, Ionic, Doric, and Aeolian forms from a piece of Greek composition done by an ambitious schoolboy. Nor is the admixture of English words of serious consequence; the words are chiefly the names of things unconnected with the life of the Aborigines, and, fortunately for our purpose, the native syntax was not interfered with to any noticeable extent, owing to a very interesting circumstance. For it is peculiar to

English-speaking travellers that they endeavour to impress their meaning on the "foreign" natives by speaking very loudly and distinctly, and by using what has been called "jingalese" syntax, after the style of Mr. Alfred Jingle, which consists in uttering a series of names of things and actions without any attempt at connecting them.

Now, this is precisely the style of the Aboriginal speech, and the similarity of the two styles on the one hand confirms the conjecture that the Aboriginal style was a primitive, infantile method of conveying thought, and, on the other hand, it helps to explain the fact that English in its "pidgin" or "business" form is so easily acquired by foreigners.

In my interpretation of the Popela Song (Papers of the Royal Society of Tasmania, 1908), I had occasion to give some examples of this style of speaking, and we shall consider some further illustrations in due course.

For the present, we shall discuss only one point more, namely, the intonation of the Aboriginal speech, as regards word accent and phrase modulation. The records do not always indicate the word-accent, and when they do, they often vary. Two methods of indicating the accented syllable are used, viz., that of doubling the consonant after the accented vowel, and that of putting a small horizontal stroke over that vowel; and these methods are employed with sufficient frequency to allow of definite conclusions on the matter.

As an interesting illustration we may take the word for "bullock" or "beef," quoted by H. Ling Roth from Jorgensen's vocabulary (p. 182). Jorgensen says, *inter alia*, that *buckelow* or *bacala*, "bullock," is from the English, probably because there were no native bullocks. The English word "bullock" would be changed by metathesis into "buckle," and lengthened by the usual epithetic vowel into "buckla," or something like it. It is evident that the word accent rests on the first syllable. But Norman in his vocabulary (L.R., p. 1) gives the word as *parkállar*. Now, in this vocabulary, we must eliminate the majority of the r's, as merely phonetic devices; thus we get *pak lla*, where the accent is not only marked by the stroke above the second a, but also by the doubling of the l following it.

Now, the Tasmanian word-accent was quite frequently on the third syllable from the end—the antepenult, so that the change in the present case cannot be due to a linguistic habit of placing the accent on the penult. There are at least two obvious explanations of this matter. The unstable character of the Aboriginal speech may have extended the word-accent, and left each speaker or family of speakers free to accentuate a word at random or at will. Indeed, we find strong evidence of such a state of things. For instance, H. Ling Roth quotes for “foot” or “leg” the following words—*languna* (p. ii.), *lagarra* (p. xi.), *langna* (p. xiii.), which seems identical with *langana* (p. xi.) with the accent on the first syllable, *luggana* (p. xxvi.), *leunia* (p. xxx.), *langeneh* (p. l.).

Again, the word *buckelow* may not be of English origin at all. This seems the more plausible view, for we find cognate words in the undoubtedly Aboriginal vocabulary, e.g., *wakella*—mussel (p. iv.), *wakellina*—sun or moon (p. v.), *wakella*—calf of leg (p. i.), all of which denote something “round.”

The modulation of the voice in speaking is of the same kind as that found in European languages, for instance in English as spoken by a North Briton, a Welshman, or an Irishman. We find it most clearly expressed in song and in the love of singing, and the Tasmanian Aborigines afford good examples of it. H. Ling Roth (pp. 134 ff.) gives a good account of the music of the Aborigines; but a better idea of it can be gathered from hearing the songs themselves. This is possible to us, owing to that wonderful device called the gramophone. Mr. Horace Watson, of Sandy Bay, an ardent and sympathetic student of Aboriginal life, had shown much kindness to Mrs. Fanny Cochrane Smith, one of the descendants of the Aboriginal Tasmanians, and, on one occasion she was delighted to please him by singing two native songs into a phonograph. The circumstances thus render the sincerity of her performance unquestionable. The records are in perfect order, and Mr. Watson, to help me in my study of the Tasmanian speech, most generously gave me a copy of each. I hope to have an opportunity to translate and explain these records to the Royal Society; for the present I would only point out that the first song is

distinguished for the precision of its rhythm, and the second is perhaps an imitation, not of a Highland bagpipe, as Bonwick opined, but of the melody of a native magpie, which most unmelodiously the zoologists call a "piping crow."

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## II.—PHONOLOGY AND SEMASIOLOGY.

H. Ling Roth, in his "Aborigines of Tasmania," tabulates some 3,000 words of their language. As I have stated before, his lists are fairly accurate copies of the original sources of his information, and may safely be used as a basis for our detailed investigation. We shall take our examples chiefly from the Appendix. The original recorders endeavoured to write phonetically. Thus we find on the one hand a considerable variety in the spelling of the same Aboriginal words, and, on the other hand, this variety itself enables us to fix the actual sound, because there is in most cases only one group of sounds than can be phonetically represented by all the varieties of the spelling.

But here we meet with a phenomenon which seems to present an insuperable obstacle, and yet contains the key to a plausible solution of the whole question; for we find in words of the same dialect such similarity as argues an identity of meaning, and such differences as are in other languages found as distinguishing characteristics of different dialects. We may assume words to be of the same dialect, if they appear in the vocabulary of a recorder who did not meet with more than one tribe of Aborigines, or who had sufficient knowledge of different tribes to be able to assign each word to its proper origin. Among the former are chiefly the navigators, e.g., Cook, Péron, and La Billardiére; among the latter we may mention Norman, Jorgensen, and Milligan.

Now, these quasi-identical words might have come from different tribes, and thus have formed a composite vocabulary, especially as we find, on comparing the various dialects, that they evidently are species of the same generic language. But we read in H. Ling Roth's

work (p. 166) that Mr. Robert Clark, catechist, states that on his arrival at the Flinders Settlement, in 1834, eight or ten different languages or dialects were spoken among the 200 natives then at the establishment, and that the blacks were instructing each other to speak their respective tongues. This would not have been necessary if there had been a common vocabulary, such as we find in the various dialects of English, French, German, etc.

Again, Milligan wrote (L. Roth, p. 180):—"The circumstance of the Aboriginal inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land being divided into many tribes and sub-tribes, in a state of perpetual antagonism and open hostility to each other, materially added to the number of the elements and agents of mutation ordinarily operating on the language of an unlettered people. To this was superadded the effect of certain superstitious customs everywhere prevalent, which led from time to time to the absolute rejection and disuse of words previously employed to express objects familiar and indispensable to all, thus tending arbitrarily to diversify the dialects of several tribes. The habit of gesticulation and the use of signs to eke out the meaning of monosyllabic expressions, and to give force, precision, and character to vocal sounds, exerted a further modifying effect, producing, as it did, carelessness and laxity of articulation and in the application and pronunciation of words. The last-named irregularity, namely, the distinctly different pronunciation of a word by the same person on different occasions, to convey the same idea, is very perplexing until the radical or essential part of the word, apart from prefixes and suffixes, is caught hold of."

Dr. Milligan's opinion is of great weight, as he made special efforts to obtain reliable information, and had special facilities for investigation. It is his last-quoted sentence that indicates the starting point of our present researches.

When we examine the syllables of the Aboriginal words, we notice that they are few in number and simple in structure. This is due to the paucity of consonants and vowels, and even these may be reduced, owing to the peculiarity that they can be arranged in groups, the members of which are interchangeable.

H. Ling Roth (p. 183) enumerates the following consonants—"b, c (? k), g, h (only at the end of words), k, l, m, n, p, q (qu) [ʔ k], r, t, [w], ch, and gh (pronounced as in German hochachten)."

Now, it will be shown that, very probably, these may be reduced to the following groups—b p w, d t, g k ch gh, l m n r ng.

d is apparently characteristic of the Western dialect; H. Ling Roth does not include it in his list; ng, belonging to most dialects, is also omitted.

Again, we find l, m, n, r, ng as alternatives of t, p, t, k respectively; ng may also stand for n, sometimes for nag. Thus we have practically only four consonants, corresponding to the labial, dental, guttural, and liquid sounds; the liquid sounds themselves are often assignable to other groups.

The vowels, again, are liable to be changed at will, within certain limits. For instance, we have the same meaning expressed by pana, pena, piena, poina, puna; (v. infra).

It should be stated that in this essay the vowels of Tasmanian words are to be read as if they were Italian. This is probably not quite accurate, but sufficiently so for our purpose, especially in view of the instability of the Aboriginal speech-sounds.

Thus the number of possible syllables was very small; but we shall see that, though small, it was sufficient for the needs of the speakers. The long words of our vocabularies can be cut up into syllables which are the real words of the language.

In my essay on the Evolution of Words, part of which I read before this Society in September, 1905, I endeavoured to connect the original speech sounds with definite psychic states and processes, and the principles then enunciated seem to be strikingly illustrated in the clearly primitive speech of Tasmania. I shall have occasion to refer to them incidentally later on; for the present, one example will suffice. On page 17, I wrote, *inter alia*—"Terms of endearment are essentially of a.i objective character, and require sounds of high pitch.

The thin, bright sounds, t, l, i, n, s, are typical of diminutives, not only in nouns, but also in adjectives, and even in verbs." Now, in Tasmania, we find *ina*, *enna*, *itia* as suffixes indicating diminutives, analogous with the German *ing*, the English *kin*, the French *il*, *in*, *et*, the Italian *illo*, *ino*, *etto*.

The Tasmanian diphthongs may be divided into two groups. H. Ling Roth gives *au*, *oi*, and *ou*, but omits *ie*, *ia*, as he takes the *i* of the latter group to be a consonantal *i*. The group *au*, *oi*, *ou*, to which we may add *oa*, simply represent an unstable *a* or *o*, whereas *ia*, *ie*, *ea*, are developments of *i* or *e*, indicating a lengthening in time or space, as expressed by delay, interval, or a curve; *wina* is a straight stick, *wiena* a bent or broken one.

Of the consonants, the liquids alone are capable of continuance; they therefore fitly represent motion. We find, accordingly, that *lia* (also in the forms of *lena*, *liena*, *lila*) means missile, leg, water, bush fire, iguana, kangaroo, cat, gun, crow, movable shelter, nest, stone (missile or cutting tool); *ria* (also *rene*, *riawe*, *riena*, *rina*) means toe, hand, finger, to polish, water, dance, kangaroo, rat, to run; *ni*, (also *nina*, *nile*, *none*, *noana*, *nuna*, *nuena*), means you (i.e., away from me), no, hand, take away, fire, flea, stone implement; *mina* (also *mena*, *manga*, *mana*, *meuna*), means I, mine (i.e., towards me), lips, beak, sick (restless), tongue, bird.

The labial consonants represent a sudden puff, a sending forth of energy, and are therefore very appropriate for expressing action and purpose. Thus we find *pa* (also *ba*, *wa*, *ma*) as the general suffix of verbs; as suffix, prefix, or infix, it expresses power, emphasis, magnitude. *Mana*, *mena*, *mina*, meaning "I," may well indicate, besides "motion towards me," the prime importance men attribute to their own persons. It is interesting to note that most European languages use *me* or *mi* as the pronoun of the first person. We find, further, that *pena* (also *pana*, *penina*, *pina*, *poine*, *puna*) means lance, oar, laugh, fish, pointed, sharp, bird.

The dental consonants, pronounced by practically shutting the teeth, indicate inclusion and exclusion, and by their sound, a sudden stop or thud. Here, again,

nina, nara, besides meaning "motion away from me," may indicate the non-ego, the outer world, i.e., you, he, she, they, that thing; ni or noi, similarly, may mean negation, as well as "apart from." Tana (also tawe, tia, tiena, tienbug, tona, toni), means was (at a distant time), depart, heap, mound, to add, vanish, sink, spark, call (to a distance). Na, as "that thing," is the general suffix for nouns and adjectives, sometimes replaced by ra or lia.

The guttural consonants may express disgust (as in the sound of retching), or something connected with the dropping of the chin. For the former meaning we have the common suffix ak or ik, expressing dislike, unpleasantness, also negation. For the latter we have kana (also kami, kaiena, kuna), meaning mouth, teeth, jaw, cheek, to speak, to sing, to reject.

It will be observed that in the examples given, only the first consonant, with the following vowel or diphthong, enters into the argument.

The sounds r and l have other functions besides that of indicating motion; they also denote emphasis, especially the r. Of course, a moving thing has more energy than a stationary one. In Norman's vocabulary, the letter r is very conspicuous; in most instances it is merely a phonetic device to assure a correct pronunciation, but in others it probably indicates the throaty bass-voices of the Aboriginal speakers.

This is practically the whole material of the speech of the Tasmanian Aborigines. All things were distinguished according to two ideas, namely, rest and motion. The liquid consonants expressed motion, and all the others, rest. This is the explanation of the frequent interchange of sounds within two groups. By a development of psychic activity, it came to pass that the dental sounds signified rest simply, the labials, rest attained after motion, the gutturals, motion after rest, and the liquids, simple motion. From these four groups, practically represented by four simple syllables, the whole speech was formed, as will appear plausible from our further demonstration.

There were so few things of interest to the Aborigines, that they could easily express them by a small

number of words. Of course, any particular thing could not be denoted by their words except by the aid of gestures and convention, as in the names of persons and places. And this explains why the dialects were apparently foreign to each other. What would in one tribe be named after its speed, would in another take its name from its habit or size. Indeed, I am inclined to hold, against the current theory that the Tasmanians had no generic names, that they had no specific words, even the proper nouns being made up of generic constituents.

In the examples given so far, we observed chiefly the first consonant, with the following vowel which made it audible, and took no heed of anything that came after these.

The vowels were, as has already been pointed out, so unstable as to be of no importance for our demonstration.

We will now proceed a step further, by adding another consonant to the syllable, with or without another vowel, as may be found convenient.

From the four primitive words we derive twelve secondary terms, three from each. It is evident, from what has been shown, that if the second consonant is of the same class as the first, the result is merely a strengthening of the first, by repetition. For instance, lala, ant, is the swift runner; lane, to strike, flog, look, is repeated or forcible motion towards some object; mamana, tongue, is the repeatedly moving pointed member; nala, manana, earth, the movable part of the surface of the ground; nama, white man, the rover who has no tribe to stay with; nami, a stone than can be rolled or carried or thrown; ralla, frog, the swimming and hopping thing, also energetic, full of movement; rene, run; rilia, fingers, movable limbs.

The first syllables uttered by an infant are naturally pa, ba, ma, and later, na, etc. Hence we have in most languages words like baby, mama, papa, nana. In Tasmanian, too, we have pawe, pawawe, little child; nina mina, (my) mother, father.

We must be careful to avoid mistaking the n of the nominal suffix na for the final consonant of the previous syllable, or vice versa.

We shall have therefore the following twelve combinations—liquid+labial, liquid+dental, liquid+guttural, labial+dental, labial+guttural, labial+liquid, dental+guttural, dental+liquid, dental+labial, guttural+liquid, guttural+labial, guttural+dental. These may be illustrated as follows:—

(1) Liquid+labial—motion+purpose: lapa, wing; lapri, see, leipa, lopa, fire; lepena, eye; lepina, lepera, neck; lewana, wind; lube, sheoak tree (the best fire-wood); lupari, free.

Mapa, black, the darkness moving over the sky and earth, (we have also lewara, night); mebia, moving away.

Newina, eat; newitie, kangaroo; niparana, face; nubra, nupre, eye; nubena, crayfish (motion and purpose are shown in the claws).

Rabalga, hand (the member which takes); roba, to rush; ruwa, sand-lark; roba and ruwa are perhaps simply ro+pa, i.e., moving quickly or energetically.

(2) Liquid+dental—motion+rest: lotta, tree (that grows and then remains at rest); lutana, moon (whence comes the light that rests on the earth), hence light, as in ludo-wine, white man.

Mata, round like a ball (whirling and then fixed); mata, dead, to die (moving and then still); meta, rope or sinew (used for fastening movable things); mutta, bird (from its plumpness; the mutton-bird is probably the mutta-bird).

Nata, earth, soil (remaining still after being moved); nutiak, to retch (the suffix ak denoting the unpleasant feeling and the peculiar sound).

Retena, heart (with its intermittent motion); riatta, tree (like lotta); rudana, lazy (when in motion, longing for rest); rutta, hard, dry (dried fluid, e.g., mud or blood).

(3) Liquid+guttural—motion+rejection: lagana, foot (put on the ground and lifted up again); laguana, to burn oneself (withdrawing from one, the fire); legana, lugana, water (moving away in stream and ebb); legara, to run away; legunia, dress or covering (removable and warm—une); logune, to cut (making one shrink owing

to the burning sensation, v. *laguana*); *loigana*, snake, the fiery serpent.

*Magra*, *megra*, day, grass (i.e., that which passes away); *mengana*, to pull, get (move away from its place); *miengpa*, to abstain, reject; *moga*, *moka*, water; *monga*, a fly (which is ever ready to go away); *mugra*, to hide oneself; *mukra*, spaniel (the swimming beast); *mungena*, ear (projecting from the head, and originally movable).

*Nangumora*, (very) far; *nenga*, canoe (for leaving the land); *noki*, give me (you give away something); *nugara*, to drink; *nugrina*, to vomit (both involving motion of the gullet).

*Raka*, spear (sent forth); *ragi* or *ragina*, white man (the hostile, repulsive moving thing). We find this interpretation confirmed by the word *ragi-rappa*, a demon who attacks people, a devil; we remember the Chinese denotation of white men as "foreign devils"; *rugara*, ear (compare *mungena*); *rurga*, seaweed used for food (compare *nugara*, *nugrina*).

(4) Labial+dental—projection+rest: *patina*, egg; *patrolla*, spark, fire (projected, resting); *rolla*, energetic; there may also be a connection with "crackling"; *piterina*, sun (as to its rays); *poiete*, head (projecting from the body, but stationary); *potta malitie*, freestone (white stone that can be thrown—*malitie*, white).

(5) Labial+guttural—projection+rejection: *pagra*, alas! (an utterance of pain); *pakara*, to fling at (motion and dislike); *pakaria*, shooting-star; *pakaritia*, ignis fatuus; *panga*, leech (an attacking, repulsive thing); *pangana*, mud (clinging and disagreeable); *pegara*, to throw; *pegi*, teeth (acting against each other); *pugana*, black man, good at attack and defence, hence strong, stout; *pugana*, five (the "bunch of fives"); *pugara*, to swim.

(6) Labial+liquid—projection+motion: *palla*, round, bail, energetic, large, stout, sun; *palina*, egg (small and round); *palana*, stars, little sun; *pallawa*, man, warrior (with *wa* as suffix of emphasis); *penna*, spear, man, facetious; *piena*, leech; *poiinta*, *poienna*, point of spear;

parawe, to throw, put, go away; parapa or paraba, whale, porpoise (large, moving); perena (spear); poirina, porpoise; pora, heavy rain; proie, leaf; pruana, smoke.

(7) Dental+guttural—rest+rejection: takani, tagara, to go away (to lift up the foot from its resting position); dogna (= tagana), foot; takira, root, foot of tree; tanga, limpet; tegana, heart (its beating being like rhythmic footsteps); togane, paw, foot; tokana, heel; tugra, thigh; tugana, swift (of foot); tunganik, asleep (the pejorative, ik, implying negation; tugana, to eat (passing from rest to the motion of the gullet).

(8) Dental+liquid—rest+motion: tale, toad, frog (alternately resting and moving); talina, the back (unchanging, but moving as part of the body); talpe, to come, start off; tile, basket (an inanimate thing meant to be carried); toline, bark of a tree (grown fast to the trunk, but liable to peel off); toluna, shoulder (compare talina); tula, thigh, tongue (fixed, but movable).

Tema, hut (movable resting place); time, never (really "always," "resting or moving"; compare the French *jamais*, which also means "always" (from the Latin *jam*, *magis*, i.e., now and evermore, and is used for "never"); tome, to fall.

Tana, was (looking back from the present moment); tanate, mischief (pretending to be resting, and yet moving to do some harm); tene, rib (compare talina); tena, tree-fern (stationary, but growing); toni, tenine, nails on fingers and toes (compare tena); tina, stomach (compare tula); tona, spark; tone, to dive, fall; toni, to call (to cause to move); tuna, winter, really "snow" (the solid, falling thing); tunapi, to know (to have the skill to act).

Tara, to weep, really "to sit down and sway the body in token of grief"; tara, tree (compare tena); tara, wallaby (compare tale); teri, basket (compare tile); terana, terina, bones of skeleton (compare tene). The bones of the body are stationary, but growing. In the skeleton they are chiefly noticeable for being hard and dry. This meaning is transferred to teruna, tro-watta, flint implement; torona, tree, is a form of tra-na; tru, fist is so called from its bony hardness; tura, winter; turana, snow; turela, hail, are forms of tuna.

(9) Dental+labial—rest+projection: *tapa*, ham; *tab-rina* (= *tapa-rina*), the back, a prolongation of the ham; *tepara*, come; *tipla*, eyebrow; *tapleti*, *tabelti*, to travel; this word is supposed to be an imitation of the English equivalent, but it is not probable that that word was used so frequently as equivalent of “to walk,” that practically all the tribes incorporated it in their vocabulary. According to our theory, *tapleti* is simply *taplet-i*, i.e., the ham alternately moving forward and resting; *takleti* would refer to the same action of the legs or the feet; but we find numerous instances of the group *pl*, and very few of the group *kl*; the latter seems to have been difficult or disagreeable to the Tasmanians; *tapleti* would make an excellent substitute for the objectionable *takleti*. The probability of the exchange is confirmed by the alternative form *kabeti* for *tableti*.

(10) Guttural+liquid—rejection+motion: *kole*, to twitch, snatch away; *koliēna*, orphan, whose parents have been taken away. In further confirmation of our remark regarding the group *kl*, we find that these two words are practically alone in beginning with the syllable *kal*, *kel*, *kol*, etc.

*Kami*, mouth, teeth, tongue, probably owes its *k* to the movement of the chin (v. supra); we find many words belonging to this meaning of *km*, but very few signifying rejection. Of the latter, however, we have a characteristic one: *komptēna*, a spirit of evil, objectionably moving near to human beings, *tena* being akin to *tanate*, mischief (v. supra).

*Kana*, voice, noise, song, speech, evidently belongs to the “chin” group of *k* sounds. H. Ling Roth’s lists give no *kan* words of the other; indeed, the number of words beginning with *k* is comparatively small; the sound of rejection is usually found at the end of a word.

*Krakne*, *krakēna*, to rest, sit down, is made up of *kara* and the negation *k* and the suffix *ne* or *ēna*, which properly belongs to nouns; *kara-k* would then mean “disagreeable motion? No!” We find *kroti* (quick motion), *kronie* (to climb), both implying exertions which the Aborigines disliked.

(11) Guttural+labial—rejection+projection: *kupa*, good (to give or take). We find *kapugi-lia*, mouth, and

kepeGINE, to eat, but these are evidently composed of ka, jaw, and pegi, teeth.

(12) Guttural+dental—rejection+rest: kate, kaita, bad (i.e., do not like it, leave it alone); katala, snake, the bad moving thing; katela or katila, seal, and katina, cow, would also be so called if the Aborigines were at first afraid of them; kote, quick, is akin to kroti (v. supra), but there is a curious development of the idea in koti, little, kaita, dog (small beast), the idea of quickness and smallness being easily associated, and from the idea of "small" we readily pass to that of "pet." Compare also "cat" and kitten." Again, there is a connection between koti and kate (v. supra); as the Aborigines called a good or great man pallawa or pugana, they would naturally call a little thing, kate, bad. Kotube, to tug at a rope, is expressive of the resistance of an inert mass to the action of pulling (— be or pe).

The examples here given will suffice for the purpose of illustrating the principle; their number might easily have been augmented. In some cases the same word was made to serve in two places. This was done because there was a plausible alternative, and because it is quite possible that different speakers named the same thing on slightly different principles. The orthography is that of H. Ling Roth's lists: phonetic, not always consistent, but sufficiently accurate for our present purpose.

It will have been noticed that the interchange of kindred sounds is not detrimental to the clearness of the meaning of words, and that the vowels are remarkably variable.

Before we proceed to the illustration of our theory in the case of longer words, it will be necessary to draw special attention to the variation of speech sounds. Here it is difficult to decide in each case whether the variation is due to the general instability of the Aboriginal orthoepy, or to the difference of dialects, or to the insincerity of the Aborigines, who would probably not be eager to deprive themselves of the means of secret communication with each other, or to the defective perceptivity of the recorders, or to their linguistic idiosyncrasies, or to careless writing or transcription of the original records, or to the printer or his reader.

Still, in most instances, the differences and analogies, taken together, are sufficiently consistent to allow us to formulate some general rules.

We must remember, also, that the language did not spring into existence in the form recorded, though it did, no doubt, begin in a form completely satisfying all the requirements at that time. If my theory is correct, the four words on which all the rest are built show an absolutely primitive form of human speech; previous to it there can have been no linguistic thought, and the utterance must have been confined to inarticulate animal cries. The subsequent word-formation was a subconscious operation, based on heredity, environment, and habit turned to instinct.

The primitive state in which the Tasmanian Aborigines were found by the Europeans, argues that their logical skill had been confined to the immediate needs of their bodies, and that their language was in a similarly primitive state. The four words still sufficed to express their thoughts, and thus their recorded speech carries us back to the beginning of human society.

Thus, the four syllables form the permanent skeleton of the Tasmanian language, and their combinations and variations are the body, which is specifically different in each individual, though generically it is the same in all.

We may now state some general principles of variation:—

(1) Medial and initial *g* is often elided, replaced by *y*, or represented by *o* or *u*.

This phenomenon is observed in several European languages, ranging from Greek to English. In Tasmanian we have, e.g., *proguna* and *pruana*, smoke; *pruga*, *paruga*, bosom; *perenna*, spear; and *proina*, *proigh*, *proingha*, *broii*, *proibi*, big; *ganna* and *yanna*, teeth; *ngune*, *une*, wane, fire; *kana*, *wana*, *ona*, to speak.

(2) The places of the vowels are chosen arbitrarily.

We may have prosthetic vowels, as in *ali*, good, which seems identical with *li*, moving, alive, useful; *anamana*, hand, from *namana*, strong; *enganema*, eagle-hawk, from *ngonina*, bird, which is in itself derived from *naganina* or *laganina*, the small, flapping thing.

Again, we have regularly an epithetic vowel, a, e, or i; every word is an example of this.

Within the word, the vowels found places where they could. We have *treinia*, *terinia*, *taranienna*, *triunia* for "hard-beaked bird," e.g., owl, crow; *ria*, *rilia*, *riena*, *raiana*, for hand; *raumpta* and *raumata*, for wombat; *pengana*, *panugana*, *pugrena*, *pugerinna*, for dirt; *langana*, *languna*, *lugana*, *langna*, *dogna*, *lagerra*, for foot; *lowanna*, *nowana*, *lowa*, *loanna*, *loa*, *loalla*, *lowla*, for woman; *leni*, *loa*, *liena*, *lia*, *lina*, for water.

(3) Within their respective groups, the consonants may be freely interchanged. This has already been touched upon, and will be further illustrated in the sequel.

### III.—ETYMOLOGY.

It is beyond the scope of our present research to examine all the words recorded by H. Ling Roth, whose list, as has already been stated, may be considered as practically complete. It will be sufficient to deal with such a number of them as will enable a critic to test our theory.

We shall take Norman's list for the Eastern speech, and Milligan's for the Southern, Eastern, and North-Western and Western words. Unfortunately Milligan did not discriminate between the last two dialects, but this is not of great importance, as they have much in common with each other.

We shall find some instances of onomatopoeic words, such as *pratteratta*, hail, from which we get *paratta*, ice, frost; but we need not do more than acknowledge the existence of such words, as their connection with our theory is remote, and possibly merely accidental.

Nor need we take notice of evidently interjectional words, for we are not now concerned with the origin of language generally, but with the elements and development of the speech of the Tasmanian Aborigines.

I have dissected some 1,200 Tasmanian words, but shall confine my present discussion to a much smaller number of characteristic specimens, taking, them, generally, in alphabetical order.

## THE EASTERN SPEECH.

Bungana, chief—same as pugana.

Bairkutana, horse—par, big; kut, quick; na, nominal suffix.

Kumienna, weak—kami, voice; ienna, diminutive suffix.

Karana, quiet—ka, not; ra, moving.

Kukanna, noise, much talk—kana, voice; ku, reduplication for emphasis.

Krawala, cold—kra, stiff; wala=palla, very much.

Kanara, little (child), magpie—kan, voice; ra, continuous.

Kanaliria, conversation—kan, voice; li, quick; ri, continuous.

Kamina, chin—ka, jaw; mina=pena, projection.

Kuegi, head—ka ka, mouth, jaw, cheeks; the whole face; round; spherical.

Kanawelegana, sing—kan, voice; we, active; leg, rhythmical.

Komtina, dog—ka(m), teeth; tin, projecting.

Kaitagunamena, friend—ka, tongue; tag, foot; namana, hand (in my service).

Kulugana, claw, talon; ka, tooth, (of the) lug, foot.

Kawurrina, bush fire—ka, eating up; wur=pur, solid, ground.

Kotruolutie, baby—kot, little; ruo=nug, drink, suck; lut, white; ie, diminutive. Query: Were the young babies of paler complexion than the adults? It is the case elsewhere.

Koti malitie, young boy or girl—koti, young; ma=pa, very; lit, bright, fair; ie, diminutive.

Lia litea, ocean—li, water; lit, bright, sparkling ripples; ia, diminutive. This appears also in the form of lieltia, rollers on the beach (with white crests).

Liopakanapuna, salt—lia, sea; pug, solid; peun, sharp, burning.

Lagapak, fiddle—lag, leg, stick, bow; pa, moving; k, not getting away; or simply pa ka, moving forward and backward.

Liawe, open—li, move ; we, let, make.

Leiemtoniak, ashamed—len, look ; ton, downwards ; k, bad.

Lackaniampaoik, bandy-legged—lag, leg ; nia, bent ; pe, stick ; k, bad.

Leiriak, bitter—li, water ; ri, restless (of the sea) ; k, bad.

Leware, night—lug, lie ; war, ground.

Lalina, day—lin, see : l, reduplicated, plenty.

Lila, gun, waddy—li li, very swift, flying.

Lowanakana, circle—low, woman ; kan, sing ; the singing women standing or sitting in a circle.

Langta, long, far—len, move on ; t stop : a distant point.

Luga perenna, survivor—lug, walk away ; pe, very ; ren, quickly.

Lugana, foot, oyster—the oyster lies flat like the sole of the foot.

Lowa, woman—lug, foot ; wa, active ; the woman had to do all the work of the tribe except hunting and fighting.

Lingena, languna, loangare, likangana, likura—wind, to blow ; len, continuous motion.

Lietinna, cold water—li, water ; tuna, cold.

Liena peuniak, scalding water—li, water ; pe, very ; un, fire ; k, bad.

Lenigugana, stars—len, see ; kuka, round things.

Miengpa, abstain—mien=wien, bend, turn away from, not ; pa, doing.

Mianabere, kneel—mien, bend ; pere, leg.

Mealle, kneel—mial, bend ; leg, leg.

Mealli tonerragetta, inactive—mealli, knee ; to(ka), heel ; narra, very ; kita, small, useless.

Mikrakaniak, sick—mie, not ; kraka, rest, sleep ; k, bad.

Miengkommenechana, anger—mien, distorted, projecting ; kamina, chin ; kana, speak.

Munnagana, ankle—mien, bend ; leg, foot.

Malitie, white—ma=pa, very ; lut, shining.

Mientonka, tumble—mien, bend, knee ; ton, fall ; k, bad.

Mienintiak, tremble—mien, bend ; inti=inni, a little ; k, bad.

Marana, battle (few killed)—pa, hit ; ren, run.

Monna perenna, sulky, pouting—muna, lips ; perenna, projecting.

Manina langatik, steal—ma=mie, not ; nina, yours ; langt (take) far away ; k, bad.

Malangena, child—Ma=mie, not ; lag, foot, move, walk ; in, dimin.

Manugana, spawn of frog=perhaps the same as malangena, with a possible change from ina (dear little one), to kana, croaker.

Miamengana, battle—mien mien, knee to knee ; kana, yell.

Mienemiento, kill—mien, mien, battle ; t, stop, strike down.

Mungwenia, grub—mien, bend ; wen=pen, stick ; i, small.

Mungena, ear — mung = mien = pen, projecting, round.

Mongana, blowfly—Mung, round.

Mungunna, fish—mung-winna, round and long.

Mungienna, porcupine—mung-ienna, round and little.

Mingawina, porpoise—v. mungunna.

Mugana, shag (bird)—mung, round, plump ; it may also be a doublet of nagana, lagana, flapping thing, bird.

Mana, a fly—man-a, round, or a contraction of mon-gana.

Makana, star-fish—mag=mung, round. The transition from man to mang and then to mag is quite natural.

Ni, there, behold ! with emphatic k—neka, niga, there ; with emphatic r—nara, very, he, she, they, self.

Nune, take—ni, ni, there !

Numbe, here—ni, ni, pe, here indeed ; lumbe is a doublet of this.

Nunamara, deduct—Nune, take ; mare, one.

Nentega meniawa, yesterday—ni ni, not at all ; teg, sleep ; mi, I ; ni, you ; wa, do—when last we were awake—

Naniakana, growl—kana, saying ; ni ni, no ! no !

Nietta mina, little brother—ni, you ; etta, little ; mina, my own, my own little one.

Nianti mina, little sister—nia nitia mina, the same.

Nunalmina, father—ni, you ; al, good ; mina, my own !

Nienna, mother—ni, you ; enna, dear little mother.

Neingmina, mother—nienna mina, my own little mother. The addition of the endearing term mina to these words shows again the affectionate, childlike disposition of the Aborigines.

Nelumie, help—ni, you ; lumbe= numbe, here.

Nuna mina, good—ni ni, these things ; mina, for me !

Noile, bad—no ali, not good.

Nierina, hawk—nie=mie, in a circle ; rin, flying.

Narra muna, yes—narra, that ; muna, projecting, evident.

Nebele, music—ne=le, lively ; pe, make ; leg, feet.

Oana, tell, speak—probably from kana ; wana would be better spelling ; there are so few words in o that they are probably misprints.

Punie, finger nail—doublet of toni (supra).

Plegana, leg—pa, strong ; leg, leg.

Pugali, swim—puga, man ; li, water.

Poingana, hair—pen, spear, stick ; hair dressed in form of sticks.

Puganina, husband—puga, man ; nina, that—that man, "he."

Patrollana, musket—patrol, fire ; len, flying.

Poiniakana, laugh, facetious—pe, sharp ; ia, little ; kan, sounds.

Pugoneori, smile—pe, sharp ; kan, voice ; ali, kind, good.

Rinneaguanettia, dispute—rin, quick ; ia, short ; kan, words ; ettia, trifling things. The form guan for kan supplies the missing link of the series kan, guan, wan, oan.

Riawieak, full (after a meal)—ria, feet ; pe, active ; ak, with difficulty.

Rinieta, chase—rin, run ; ia, hither and thither ; t, stop—run till you have it.

Riakuna, dance and song—ria, foot ; kana, voice ; an Aboriginal ballad.

Tonna, fire, literally, spark—compare with tuna, snow. These contraries have parallels in European languages, e.g., French *frire*, German *frieren*, Italian *caldo*, English *cold*. It is interesting to find the phenomenon in Tasmanian. Originally *tonna*, a contraction of *tonina*, would be a “small, falling thing, and in this respect would coincide with tuna, snow.

Tonipeprinna, spark—toni, fire; pe, prinna, fly.

Tentia, red, topaz—ton, fire; itia, dimin.—somewhat like fire.

Tugana, eat—toka, footstep, periodic downward motion. It is possible that *tonna*, fire, is a contraction of this, as it “eats up” everything.

Tone, dive—simply “falling,” or else “going down with jerky motions.”

Tughenapuniak, lean—tug, eat; pun, full; ak, no use.

Weba, weipa, wigetina, wina, winalia, wieta, wita—sun, moon; weiba, wiba, wibia, wieba, man; wia, wiena, wigena, wina, wiwina, winanana, wood, twig. The common root is *pe*—strong, moving, projecting.

Wuga, wutta, wughta, earth; pug, solid; ta, stationary.

Warra-na, bark of tree, shell, anything curved, blue sky, vault, cloud shape, ghost; pura, pulla, round.

## THE SOUTHERN SPEECH.

The words bear the same general character as those of the Eastern speech. The separate list is given because Milligan and Norman based the distinction on the domicile of the Aborigines they examined, and because slight differences of pronunciation may thus be discerned. It is now impossible to assign shades of meaning to particular tribes; but this is immaterial, as the meaning of speech sounds varied in every individual, within definite limits, of course.

Koka, ruddy cheeks, blood, red. This is a reduplicated *ka*, *chin*; it would refer to the strikingly red colour of the gums, tongue, etc., and thus assume the general meaning of “red.” We have seen *kuegi*, head, from the same *kaka*, as the sum of these parts; but its meaning was there referred to shape and position, not to colour.

Kokata, moan, howl—kan, voice, repeated, with t to express the sobs.

Kawuta, evening—ka, red; wutta, earth, at the horizon.

Kraka wughata, stand up—kraka, rest, stand; wughata=pug, firm; ta, stationary. In the East, we find wuga, wughta, for "earth."

Krugana wughata, aloft—wughata, ground; krugana appears also as kroana, to climb, soar; the phrase means "to climb from the ground." In the Eastern speech we find kronie; this might argue that the more primitive forms were characteristic of the South, but the evidence on this point is conflicting; for instance, we have a Southern tannatea (crazy) to compare with the Eastern tagantienna.

Lia mena, lake—lia, water; mien, round, enclosed.

Legara, run—compare legana (supra); the suffix ra often takes the place of na in the South.

Line, house, hut, nest, place—some movable shelter.

Line rotali, encampment—line, abode; rot, dry; ali, suitable.

Loini, liena, bush fire—moving slowly (note the diphthongs).

Lugga kanna, step—lug, foot; kan, sound.

Luggara, fun, sport, dance—lug, foot.

Lunghana, strike, flog, beat—as the ground is struck with the foot.

Lungana, kill—the result of the stroke.

Longhana, longana, sleep—like death.

Lungana, swift—of foot.

Lughra, heat—from running; compare Eastern magra, day.

Lughrata, hot—lugra, heat; t, stationary, permanent.

Lughoratah, summer—doublet of lughrata.

Leghro-mena, perspire—Legro, heat; pen, projecting, exuding.

Mattawebe, firewood—matta, dead; weba, stick.

Mungara, flint—pug, solid. This word also appears as mughra and mora.

Mughra malli, topaz—pug, solid; pa-lut, very bright.

Mora trona, flint—pug, solid; tro, hard.

Mabbile, altogether, quite, many—pa pel, very round, strong, numerous; compare English “roundly,” “round number.”

Moi, mie, mungie, dead—Eastern mien, bent, round, return, not, heap, sick, feeble.

Moimabbile, battle—Moi, dead; mabbile, many.

Moimutte, skirmish—moi, dead; mutt, heap, i.e., few; if there were many, they could not be seen at once, as if in a heap.

Matta, mutta, moatta, round, heap, spherical, pigeon, plump—pug, solid; t, stationary; compare wugata. The series is pugata, wugata, mugata, moata, muta, mata; as variant, munga.

Munghe mabbleli, a load—mungie, heap; mabbile, big.

Mie luggrata, fever—mie, sick; luggra, hot; ta, lie down.

Mene ruggera, acrid—me, I; ne, not; nugara, drink; compare Eastern tugana.

Moie, muie, muggena, lips, nose—compare the Eastern muna, lips. The two liquids, if they were certain to belong to the root, would well represent the movable parts of the face; we have the Eastern mungenna (ear) and mongtena (eye) to confirm this conjecture. Then, again, we have the Eastern mokena, water, which might refer us to the moist parts of the head. Finally, we have mien, curved, which might refer to the curved outlines of lips, nose, ears, etc.

Nun oine, a greeting—nune, there; wi=pe, active; ne, you.

Nire, good—nara, the very thing (needed), whence also—to heal.

Nirabe, correct—nara, that; pa, indeed; that is it!

Narrawa, yes—doublet of nirabe.

Neka, there—ne, that; ka, yonder.

Neggana, another—neka, that; na, that thing.

Naba, other—na, yonder thing; pa, indeed.

Nubre, eye—doublet of lebreña, lepreña, a missile; the power of vision sent forth like a lance; compare “shooting glances.”

Narramoiewa, enough—Narra, that; moi, to me; wa, will do.

Oghnemipe, answer—o, prosthetic; kan, speak; mi, to me; pe, do.

In the Vocabulary, p. xx., we find oghnamilce, ask, which H. Ling Roth endeavours to improve to ognamili (p. lxix.). The true solution is on p. xx., where we find oghnemipe, answer. The oghnamilce is thus evidently a badly transcribed ognamibe. An interesting variant of the word is oangana, inform, tell, evidently a form of kan-kan-a, speak with emphasis.

Pakara, fling—pa, forcibly; kara, throw away.

Papalawe, swallow (bird)—pe pe, very much; li, moving; we, active.

Papla, big—pa pal, very round, stout, strong.

Panubre, sun—pa, big, powerful; nubre, eye.

Pallanubrana, sun—pa, big; la, round, moving; nubra, eye.

Papatongune, thunderstorm—pa pat, loud crash, (onomatopoeic), ngune, fire; or else—pa pa, very big; ton, falling.

Poimatelina, lightning—pe, strike; mate, dead; lina, like a spear.

Pawe, small, rascal—pe pe, mere dot, small; compare German knabe, boy, and English knave, of no account.

Pawawe, small boy—pe pe pe, just a series of dots. We may also refer these two words to the "baby" group (v. supra).

Panubratone, dusk—panubra, sun; tone, set.

Panga, pinga, leech, small caterpillar—pena, lance shape.

Putia, none—paw, little; itia, dimin.; less than little. • infinitely small, practically nothing. Here we have a curious possibility of the instinctive perception of the mathematical theory of limits. "Nothing," being an abstract idea, was beyond the grasp of the Aboriginal mind.

Puda, smoke—putia, unsubstantial.

Patingunabe, extinguish—pat, stamp; onomatopetic, though it fits in with our "projection+rest"; ngune, fire; be, do.

Poina, hair (dressed in sticks), fragrance (issuing forth), entrails (in long strings), pettish (ready to take

the offensive), facetious (compare "shafts of wit"), pun, bird (shooting through the air), pena, lance.

Poenghana, laugh—pen, facetious; kan, voice.

Pallakanna, shout—mighty voice.

Poiete, head—pena, erect figure; ita, stop, end, diminished.

Poetarunna, skull—poet, head; ren, running, smooth.

Poetakannapawenea, whisper—poet, head; kan, voice; paw, small; ne, away, towards someone.

Poieta kannabe, talk—poet, head; kan, voice; be, active.

Poira kunnabea, talk—a doublet of the same; instead of ita we have the rarer diminutive ira; ina is more common; bea, like nea in the previous word, has an epithetic a.

Rialanna, air, breeze—ri, moving; len, along.

Rallana proiena, gale—rallana=rialanna; proiena, big. Rallana may also have affinity with ralla, strong.

Rotuli, long, tall—rot, dry, hard; li, long; grass. We may also refer it to rot, dry grass, ali, good.

Ranna murina, inactive—ren, move; mur, heavy; in, somewhat: somewhat heavy or slow in moving.

Ranga, knee—ren, flexible joint.

Raggamutta, lame—ranga, knee; mutta, thick, stiff.

Roatta, hurt, injured—from raga wutta=raga mutta.

Ruete, lazy—doublet of roatta.

Riatta, gum tree—motionless thing, standing stiff-kneed.

Retakunna, creak (of limbs of trees)—riatta, tree; kan, voice, sound.

Tramutta, pebble—tra, hard; mutta, thick, round.

Trowatta, pebble—doublet of tramutta.

Tawe, tape, takawbi, go—taka, heel; pe, active.

Tikotte, hunger—tug, eat; kote, quickly, eagerly.

Turra, winter, snow—doublet of Eastern tuna.

Toina, hawk, pelican; tanna, owl; tene, rib—doublets of pene, lance.

Uratte, frost, hoar-frost—doublet of waratte, paratte (Eastern).

Una, fire—doublet of wina, stick, firewood; or of ngune, from nagana, the “eater up,” or even from ngonina, nagana, the flickerer, flapper.

Ughana kanna nire, true—oana, speak; kan, word; nire, good.

Warra, bark of tree—palla, round, shell, “pallium.”

Warrane, blue sky—warra, vault.

Warrena, warrentinna, cloud in sky—warra, rounded mass; tin, extensive.

Waratte, hoar-frost. There seems to be an interesting interchange of meanings. Paratta, waratta are onomatopoetic, from the prattling noise of hail or the crackling of icicles; but the ice forms a covering, like bark, and so we have the warra family of words, in touch with palla, parra, round.

Warrawa, spirit of the dead—warra, cloud, apparition; wa, active.

Wina, fuel, stick, taste, feel, try, wake—pena, stretch out, active.

Wia lutta, red charcoal—wia, wood; lut, bright, shining.

## THE WESTERN AND NORTH-WESTERN SPEECH.

Here we have some striking characteristics, different from those of the Eastern and Southern words; but, when allowance has been made for these, the words are found to be essentially the same.

We notice at once a softer pronunciation of the consonants, b, d, g, for the Eastern p, t, k. We also have the nominal suffix, *lea*, to take the place of the Eastern *na*. As a specimen of the extraordinary spelling occasionally used by the recorders, we may note *i-aynglhalea* (*bad*), which seems to stand for the Eastern *wiena-na* (*crooked*). Such spelling might make the whole of the record doubtful but for the fact that there is a certain consistency underlying the spelling, which enables us to establish fairly reliable conclusions. We must bear in mind that the climate and physiographical features of the West and North-West are singularly like those of the West of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, and we need not be surprised if the intonation and articulation of the

speech of Western Tasmania bears some analogy to that of the Gaelic, Welsh, and Erse. The following words are assigned to the North-West:—

Eribba, cockatoo—e, prosthetic; li, flying; pa, active.

Kocha, swan—ka ka, repeated cries; or like Southern kuegi, round.

Karkuka, parrot—ka ka ka, the same; the cries would prevail in this case.

Kaumilea, evening—compare Southern kawuta, red ground.

Kunrare, much talk—kan, voice, jaw; re-re, continually moving.

Kunmunera, much talk—kan, noise; mun, mouth; ra, continuous.

Talba, devil; Eastern palla wa—strong, active, man, fighter.

Terriga, walk—toka, foot, with r as infix of motion.

Loyoranna, wind—li, swift; ren, moving.

Murdunna, star—par, pal, sun; tinna, diminutive.

Loina, sun—len, radiator, eye.

Longa, ground—lug, resting place.

From the Western Vocabulary we take:—

Benkelo, bullock—This form of pakalla, with the native infix n, seems strong evidence against the derivation from "bullock."

Belanilea, shadow—pal, solid; ni, not; lea, suffix.

Boabennitia, grin, make faces—pa, make; pen, laugh; itia, playfully.

Gannemerara, come here—kan, call; me, I; ran, run.

Gdulla, acid, sour—kot, little; ali, good.

Gninuckle, aged—kan, teeth; mu, lips; k, bad; le, suffix.

Illetiape, rouse him—i, prosthetic; le, quick; tape, come.

Marama, star—pal, sun; inna, little.

Lulla, foot—lug, foot; lea, suffix.

Lugh, foot—lug, without suffix.

Lola, gun—le-na, spear, striking at a distance.

Lullabi, loallibe, ship—lulla, foot, oar-beat; ; pe, active.

Lugra nire, right foot—lug-na, foot; nire, good. It is significant that a distinction of usefulness was made between the right foot and the left. In Milligan's list, we find in the Eastern Vocabulary—luggana elibana, right foot; lug, foot; ali, good; pa, strong, luaggan aoota, left foot; lug, foot; wutta, heavy. In the Southern—lugga worina, right foot; lug, foot; war—pal, strong; lugga oangta, lug, foot, wang=pen, stick, stiff; ta, stop, not elastic. In the Western and North-Western—malleare, right foot; pal, strong; lea, suffix; re, moving, foot; oolatyneecale; left foot; pug, foot; lea, suffix; ta, not elastic; no, not; ali, good. We note also the shortening of the syllables in the Western words.

Lialarragonna, sneeze—lia, quick; lanna, sharp; kana, sound.

Lanne, strike—len, swift motion.

### GENERAL VOCABULARY.

The NUMERALS are given by H. Ling Roth thus (p. 133):—

ONE—marawah, mara, marrawan, borar, parmere, pammere, marai, par-me-ry.

TWO—piawah, poi-erinna, pyanerbarwar, calabawah, boulah, katabouve, bura, cal-a-ba-wa.

THREE—luwah, wyandirwar, aliri, cardia.

FOUR—pagunta, wullyawah, cardia.

FIVE—puggana, marah, karde, kardia.

TEN—karde-karde.

According to my theory of the Tasmanian speech, these words are far less perplexing than they appear here, and would show that the Aborigines had no conception of abstract numbers, but merely of such notions as big, little, arm, hand.

Anything noticed individually or rather, "pointed at," was pa, in some form or other, with emphatic repetition and nominal suffix ra or na.

In the case of the hand or fist, a collection of five fingers which could be displayed or hidden, puga-na (solid, strong) would be the natural expression, while "four" would be a hand with the thumb invisible, that is stopping short of completeness, expressed by puganta, fist cut short.

Mara, "one" or "five," is also "the complete thing, one fist made up of five fingers," therefore palla, round, strong.

The number three would be expressed by the word for "arm," the limb with three parts, two for the arm and one for the hand; lu-pa, li-pa, strong limb, and the reduplicated a-li-ri, limb with hand, are words for "arm" and for "three."

The number two was also beyond the grasp of the Aborigines. They could see a thing divided into two or more parts which were smaller than the whole had been. Now, "small" was expressed, as we have seen, by pawe and by koti or kata, and we find these words, in some form, in all the numbers after unity. As an alternative, we find for "two" boulah or bura; these are forms of pala (big), and express the duad as an increase in bulk, not as a cutting up into smaller parts.

Wullyawah (four) is another form of this, with the magnifying or perhaps duplicating pa as suffix.

The diphthong in piawe, which we see again in poierinna, pyanerbarwar, wyandirwar, may well indicate a splitting up of a whole by the change from the single vowel sound to a composite one.

Calabawah is probably a misprint for katabawa, which is simply kata + pawe; we note the form kataboue in confirmation of this conjecture.

Karde, or its diminutive form kardia, is simply kate (small); the more parts there are the smaller will be their size.

Using uniform orthography, we get, therefore, the numerals in these forms:—

ONE—pala-pa, pala, palapa, pala, pa-pala, papala, pala, papala.

TWO—piawe, piawe-r-inna (with euphonic infix r and diminutive suffix), pia-na-pawe, kata pawe, pala, kata pawe, pala, kata, pawe.

We note the frequency of the duplication of the whole word, most appropriate in this case, and not found in any other number but "ten," which means "two fives."

THREE—ri-pa, pia-na-pa, li-ri, katia.

FOUR—pagan-ta, pal-ia-pa, katia.

FIVE—pugan-a, pala, kata, katia.

TEN—kata-kata.

The PERSONAL PRONOUNS recorded by H. Ling Roth (p. 184) may also be simplified.

Mina, I, me, mipe, has been accounted for.

Ni-na, na-ra (nard is evidently a misprint for nara), neka, mean the "non ego," "that thing," "thou, he, she, it, you, they."

Warrandur is given for "we;" but it is doubtful whether the Aborigines could grasp a collective notion; e.g., they had no plural, and no word for forest, tribe, family. H. Ling Roth quotes from La Billardière and Péron—tagari-lia, my family; but their informants had spoken of squalling babies; tagara means "to weep," and tagara-na, weepers.

A more plausible explanation is that warrander (as Norman wrote it) is a form of warrane, which means anything curved; and its application to "we" was perhaps due to the circumstance that Norman, addressing one or more Aborigines, pointed to each in turn, beginning or finishing with himself, to indicate the present company (the we), and the latter only noticed the circular motion of his finger, and told him this was warrane (a circle), whereupon he put down warrane as the equivalent of "we."

Thus, on considering the numerals and the personal pronouns, we again find the lowest possible stage of human thought, and that the four words again sufficed to express all that was required.

## IV.—SYNTAX.

H. Ling Roth, in his discussion of the Tasmanian language (pp. 178 ff.), bases his remarks on the syntax chiefly on Fr. Müller's *Grundriss der Sprachwissenschaft*. As has been stated in the introduction, the present investigation is confined to the original records; but it may be pointed out, that from our dissection of the words it seems that these words themselves were phrases, and that there is no trace of systematic accident or syntax.

In my Introduction to the study of the Aboriginal Speech of Tasmania, read on the 16th November, 1908, before this Society, I translated a song which has fortunately been preserved in three versions. For the sake of completeness and brevity, I repeat one of the versions. The literal translation was:—"Mighty, run, fire, heel, my, speedy, foot, my, speedy, thou, come, run, bird, thou, very, great-man, man, very, great-man, hero." This was rendered in plain English thus:—"With might runs the bush fire; my heel, too, is speedy, and my foot is swift. Come thou, and run with the speed of a bird! Thou art a real warrior, a man indeed, a warrior, a hero!"

In the records we have some phrases translated. I will briefly refer to them.

Wilkinson's translation of a portion of Genesis is very short, and mixed with English words. We take the first four verses as specimens:—Trota, Godna pomale heavena coantana. Lewara crackne. Godna carne, tretetea, tretetea crackne. Godna capra tretetea lewarra.

Godna and heavena are evidently English words. Capra is probably a misprint for lapra (see). Trota is a curious word. The mental development of the Aborigines had not advanced to abstract ideas; so they could not tell Mr. Wilkinson the word for "beginning." Then he probably laid a row of stones on the ground, pointed to the first one, and asked what that was. He would expect the equivalent of "beginning," and the Aborigines told him it was trota or trowatta, a round stone or pebble! We let it pass as meaning "beginning," and retranslate literally thus:—"Beginning God make heaven earth. Dark rest. God speak light, light rest. God see light dark."

Milligan's sentences (pp. xli.-xliii.) give us little further light; their general characteristics are the same as we have already discussed, with the possible exception of *ta* being used as a postposition, as in *mito* (to me), *neeto* (to thee), *nangato* (to the father); its literal meaning is "stop there." It is even possible that this shows that postpositions were earlier than prepositions; but the basis of such a contention is as yet very frail.

Indeed, in Milligan's sentences we meet with indubitable datives without *ta*, e.g., *Teeanymiape tuggane*, *Meeongyneome*—Give me some bread to eat, I am hungry. We dissect the phrase thus:—*tiana*, heap, give; *mia*, me; *pe*, do; *tugana*, eat; *mie*, not; *nagana*, eat; *me*, me.

In a previous sentence, Milligan had *Loina tyenna-beah mito*—Give me a stone. We dissect—*lena*, stone; *tiana*, give; *pe*, do; *mi*, me; *to*, stop.

Fenton, in his *History of Tasmania*, has a very interesting extract from a sermon delivered by G. A. Robinson to the Aborigines, with an interlineated translation. This document must have escaped H. Ling Roth's notice. Robinson's intimate acquaintance with the Aborigines makes this record very valuable.

Matty nyrae Parlerdee. Matty nyrae Parlerdee.  
One good God. One good God.

Parleeva nyrae, parleeva loggernu, taggerar  
native good, native dead, go

lowway waeranggelly. Parlerdee lowway  
up sky. God up.

Nyrat raegee merrydy, nueberrae Parlerdee  
Good white-man sick, looks God

waeranggelly, Kannernu Parlerdee. Nyrae  
sky speaks (prays) God. Good.

Parlerdee neuberrac nyrae raegee timene  
God sees good white-man no

merrydy. No-aily parleeva loggernu, tageera  
sick. Bad native dead. goes

toogunner, raegorroper, uence maggerer  
down evil-spirit fire stops.

Parleeva tyrer, tyrer, tyrer. Nyra parleeva  
Native, cry, cry, cry. Good native

maggerer Parlerdee waeranggelly, timene  
 stops God sky, no  
 merrydy, timene taggathe.  
 sick no hungering.

The spelling is peculiar, but the words can easily be identified. The phraseology is that of a man who had learnt to adapt his thoughts to those of his hearers. The translation is so far inaccurate as it implies accident in the Tasmanian words, e.g., in speaks, sees. We note that his word for God is Pallerdee, that is palla ritia, powerful white-man! The first word (matty, one), is not in H. Ling Roth's list; it is evidently the same as matta—round like a ball, a pebble. If Robinson tried to get the native word for "one," he would probably take up a pebble to illustrate his meaning, and duly receive the information that it was matta, a pebble, which he then would remember as the numeral "one," not realising that the Aborigines had no proper numerals at all.

In Appendix D, H. Ling Roth gives some "Phrases and Songs after Braim." There is an English version for the phrases, but it is not accurate; there is none for the songs. I will take phrase 5 as a specimen. Adopting the uniform spelling and interlineating my own version, based on H. Ling Roth's lists, we get:—

Malangtena mena take mulaga. Puti nara  
 child stop me go hunt. Not there  
 pamere lugana lika lugana krakane  
 one kangaroo like kangaroo exist  
 kate kate, ludawine pallawana nara  
 many, White-man warrior there  
 mokera nara mena lugana. Ritia teratittia  
 dog there me kangaroo. Man white  
 tape tialena nara lowe, relbia mena  
 go come there down violent act me  
 malitiena mabile. Warrawe poietanate.  
 white many. Spirit distracted.

H. Ling Roth quotes as the English version:—When I returned to my country, I went hunting, but did not kill one head of game. The white men make their dogs wander and kill all the game, and they only want the skins.

A free but essentially more accurate version would be:—When I go hunting in my native place, I find not one kangaroo where there were wont to be many. The white warrior is there; his dogs are where my kangaroos were. The white man goes and comes there and lies down to sleep. The white man has done many acts of violence to me; my heart is broken.

In Brain's songs, a characteristic phenomenon is the presence of a multiplicity of hyphens. These indicate the rhythmical tune and drum-beat to which the words were sung, as we have observed in Mrs. Fanny Smith's song. Two songs will suffice for the present, to which I will add my version. The first is:—

A re-na-too  
Ket-a-ta-e-vepa  
Mel-re-pa-too  
A re-na-too.

In our spelling, we get

A rena to  
Keta taipewa  
Mebrepa to (Mel is an error)  
A rena to.

This means: O, run hither (to me) Little one, do come! Fly to me! O, run to me!

The second is:—

Ne-par-me-ry-wa  
Ne-cat-a-ba-wa  
Ne-par-me-ry-wa  
Ne-cat-a-ba-wa.

This is characteristic of the child-like mind of the Aborigines. The words are merely:—Ne pamerewa, ne katapawe, twice over, and their meaning is:—"Here is one, look! here are two!"

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## CONCLUSION.

It would be easy to add further examples in illustration of my theory, for the material available is surprisingly ample; and my notes are copious; but it does not seem necessary to do so.

Throughout this demonstration, the arguments have been based on general principles which apply to all languages. It would have been feasible and interesting to trace analogies between the Tasmanian speech and other languages, but it was necessary to confine our attention within narrower limits.

A reader acquainted with the Greek dialects will no doubt recall many instances of interchange of consonant, of infixes, and of instability of vowels; and similar phenomena can be discerned in other languages. Indeed, some of the roots seem to be of almost universal occurrence.

What I have endeavoured to do is to find the principles by which the speech of the primitive race of the Tasmanians was governed. It seems that the languages of the Australian continent are far more developed; however, this is a subject for further research.

It is curious to note the absence of spirant and sibilant sounds from the Tasmanian speech, and also from that of the Maori of New Zealand. The latter language is of very elaborate structure, and has been said to be akin to the Japanese. I do not possess sufficient information to be able to discuss this point, but it would certainly be interesting to discover, in case of such affinity being proved, how the Maori came to be without spirants or sibilants in their speech, while the Japanese still have at least some of them.

The study of the Tasmanian language is hardly begun; but, if that language really represents the very beginning of human speech, its investigation cannot fail to excite great interest among the scholars of the world.

It seems at least probable that, as the individual and social life of the Tasmanian Aborigines was demonstrably at the lowest stage of human activity, their language, too, would be almost primitive and but one step removed from the inarticulate cry of an infant. This consideration has incited me to endeavour to reconstruct the ancient speech of Tasmania.