THE USE OF THE WOMERAH, OR "THROW STICK" 
BY THE ABORIGINES OF TASMANIA. 

[By Alfred J. Taylor, F.L.S.] 

In the course of a discussion that followed a lecture I de-
ivered recently on the Aborigines of Tasmania, Mr. Thomas 
Lewis, a member of this Society, referred to the use of the 
"Womerah," or "Throw Stick" by our natives. This was the 
first time I had heard of the instrument being used by the 
aborigines of Tasmania. There is no record of their use of it 
in any of the works dealing with their history, nor is the 
Womerah preserved in any of our Ethnological Collections of 
Tasmanian Weapons, etc. On the contrary, Ronald Gunn, 
F.R.S., informed Mr. R. Brough Smythe, who has duly 
recorded the statement in his account of the aborigines of 
Tasmania, that "they had no throwing sticks." 

The fact related to me by Mr. Lewis, that the natives of 
this island used the Womerah; that they knew it by that 
name, and that he himself saw them using it when Robinson 
brought in the remnants of the race after the celebrated 
"black war," about the year 1835, is interesting in more ways 
than one. 

It is interesting to know that it was used by our natives 
at all, and it is interesting to know that it was known by 
the same name as it is known by among the Goulburn tribe of 
natives in Victoria. The latter fact may help us in unravell-
ing the mystery of the origin of our aborigines as a race—other 
tribes calling the instrument by a different name. 

The Womerah used by the Victorian blacks is usually a 
mere stick, with a hook or projection at one end, which the 
hollow at the end of the spear was fixed on to. The object of 
the Womerah is to give length to the natural arm, and so 
gain additional leverage power for casting the spear, which, 
by its aid, could be thrown more swiftly, and to a greater 
distance. 

I was at first inclined to think that perhaps the natives of 
Tasmania had been taught the use of the Womerah by the 
native "Mosquito," who came over from New South Wales 
to Tasmania in the early days of the Colony; but Mr. Morton 
tells me that there is no hollow in the end of the spears he 
has in the Museum, showing that for such spears, at least, a 
Womerah, similar to that made by the natives of other tribes, 
had not been used. 

This, however, presents no difficulty, as Mr. Lewis tells me 
that instead of having a hook at the end, the Womerah used 
by the natives of Tasmania had a projection at one end that 
was hollowed out, and into which hollow the end of the 
spear was fixed. Perhaps others who read these notes may 
be able to throw some light on the subject.