

The natives of South Australia.

Of course, our knowledge of the natives can only be very imperfect, as we do not yet have the means to acquire it solely through their language. However, we have now reached the point where we can communicate with them about the most common things, and the advantage gained from this is already significant, as it paves the way for us to achieve our goals and win their love and affection. They now visit us so frequently and in such large numbers that it's a pleasant but real burden. But this is still far from enough to ask them about such concepts that might be the most fascinating to us and others, such as their ancestry, religion, and so on. Although some claim that they showed a kind of reverence for the moon, the reasons given for this can be explained much better in other ways. To rely on their own statements, one must approach them very carefully, as they have the habit of repeating others' words, especially when they don't fully understand them. Anyone who frames their questions in such a way as to expect a positive answer will almost certainly be wrong in nine out of ten cases. However, one thing seems certain: they are not crude idolaters.

As for their language, it's unfortunately all too true that the various tribes speak very different dialects. We choose this term carefully, because despite our limited knowledge, we believe there is a similarity; we infer this more from the same pronunciation (and from the fact that the different tribes understand each other) than from individual words. Otherwise, we would mention that the TANDANJE (English: Adelaide) tribe calls the moon KAKIRRA, and the RAMONY (English: Encounter Bay) tribe MAKIRRI. Of course, we are learning the dialect of the Tandanje tribe, partly because it comprises about 200 people and it's unlikely that a larger tribe will be found nearby, partly because we were first directed to them, and especially because many strangers, especially from Ramony, are moving here, who say that gradually (*purro purro*) many more will come. A few days ago, a woman from Murray was here, who told us that there are many black men, women, and children there, all of whom want to come here gradually. If these strangers come here, they immediately adopt the local dialect, and so we hope that this will become the main language in the future.

The speech parts we have discovered so far are adjectives, nouns, verbs, and adverbs, along with a few particles. The language seems capable of complete development, as one can create the most accurate derivations and compositions in it, for example, JURERE - ear, jurereitje - hear; Jerte mejo - fellow countryman, (it's remarkable the great similarity between Jerta and our Hertha). Such compositions are made by the natives with the greatest ease and speed. A few days ago, I went with a boy named WARITJA, who slept, ate, and worked in our house for several days, but unfortunately, he left again to go shopping in the city. On the way, we passed a tent

and I asked what it was called; he gave the expected answer: I don't know. After reflecting for a moment, he said: TURNKI-soodli. The first word is generally a term for clothing, and the latter means hut - house, so the expression translates as: Armory, but of course in a broader sense than in Germany. We are certain that the boy did not remember this composition, but formed it himself; and we believe this example proves how easily the language could be perfected. If, however, as people here believe and seem to hope, it were to be lost, the reason would at least not lie in the language itself. The natives do understand some bits of English, but not enough to be able to teach them to speak English, and even if the teacher were to attempt this, it could only apply to children. Therefore, dear brothers, you will certainly agree with us if we seek to preserve the language and preach in it, no matter what may be said or advised against it. (It wouldn't even be worth the effort to inform the government councilor of * about what we know about the language, but we won't forget him either.)

The customs and traditions of the indigenous people of South Australia are, of course, primitive and uncultured, but there are some things that are worth mentioning. These include their dances, which are of two different types.

The former is called PALTE, which the English strangely call corobbery, a word that seems to mean singing, as they apply it to our singing. This term is quite appropriate, as singing is a prominent feature of this dance. The women sit or squat in a semi-circle, wrapping their kangaroo skins into a tight bundle and placing them between their knees, hitting them with their hands. To moderate the dull sound thus produced, others strike their clubs against each other, and all sing at the top of their lungs in some ascending and descending tones. Meanwhile, the men dance or jump in front of them in a very peculiar manner; all are armed with clubs and spears, some also with a shield made of thick tree bark, and they line up in a dense group about 30 steps in front of the women. As soon as the latter begin their singing, they swing their clubs and spears, and approach in a threatening position at a slow pace; once they reach the singers, they continue their threats and challenges for a while, then suddenly retreat a few steps, start hissing and spreading and swinging their legs in an unusual manner, until in an instant the singing and hissing cease. After a half-hour interval, the same is repeated again and often several times. There is no doubt that such a PALTE is a war dance; it is not contrary to the fact that the women are in front of them, that is, between the warriors, as their wars usually arise due to the abduction of women, and these are therefore the object of their protection as well as their encouragement. This dance is always held in the evening and usually, but not always, at the time of the full moon, the latter probably not for religious reasons, but simply because they have light then.

The other lesser type is called KURI, and it usually precedes PALTE as a preparation. In this too, singing takes place and three men standing in a row stamp their feet terrifyingly in turn. The knees of such an athlete are adorned with wreaths of leaves, his face and upper body are painted with white stripes, and in each fist he holds a

club. If one is tired, he lies down and another takes his place, at which moment a loud cheer always erupts, until everyone has had their turn. Afterwards, everyone kneels down and concludes with a muffled grunt, and a movement backwards and forwards, the KURI. The whole thing greatly stimulates the vitality of Europeans and arouses them so powerfully that some even drive it to a kind of frenzied state. Whether these games were once based on religious concepts is left open, but it is certain that they do not associate them with such concepts now.

A religious use would be the circumcision of the male genitals, which, although not universally practiced, is nevertheless prevalent, and seems to be carried out at all stages of life. Circumcision is also known to be practiced among the Indians, from which some have concluded that they are descendants of the ten tribes of Israel.

They share some customs with the islanders of the South Pacific, such as the carving of the skin on the chest and back, the smearing of the body with red ochre, polygamy, etc. One of them, named KARTAMERU, whom the English call King John for no apparent reason, has four wives. Adultery is strictly punished among them.

There can hardly be any talk of social institutions among such an uneducated people, but they seem to carefully guard the few they do have. This includes that each tribe has its own specific territory, and, it seems, each family has its own small territory. What holds the tribes together must be habit and the jealousy between the tribes; for there is no authority or any kind of privileged person, at least among the Adelaide or Tandanjastam tribes; Kartamerus's kingdom, as mentioned, consists solely in the fact that he has more wives than anyone else, and is therefore better provided for.

The natives possess a few artistic skills; they make clubs and spears from hard wood, which is further hardened by burning; as well as shields made from thick tree bark; Wommeras, tools used to sharpen spears, with a kangaroo tooth at the tip, attached with a tendon from the same animal, to sharpen the spears. Their skill makes these seemingly insignificant weapons so deadly that humans, kangaroos, emus, birds, and other animals fall victim to them. They also sew quite good blankets from kangaroo skins, which they use for clothing during the day and for bedding at night; moreover, the women spin and knit nets and pouches from wild flax, which would not disgrace any German trade exhibition. It's surprising that the people don't build any houses; the reason for this is that they often change their camps due to their nomadic lifestyle and the many fleas. Their camps consist of nothing more than piles of tree branches, and, if they put a lot of effort into it, of assembled tree bark. Recently, news came from Sydney that a tribe had been discovered in New South Wales, which lived in proper houses and was superior to all their fellow countrymen in every respect.

It's not unknown to us that the natives of New Holland don't have a good reputation in Europe, both in terms of their physical constitution and their mental abilities; but we're not afraid to say, at least of those we've seen, that they're wrong about this reputation and it's completely unfounded; and the reporters who spread these rumors

must either have had little knowledge to make a correct judgment, or simply wanted to say something extraordinary and sensational. But, one might ask, why is it that we hardly find any traces of civilization among the natives? I mean, we believe it's more due to the poverty of the nature of this land, which neither produces fruits and other foodstuffs sufficient for a strong constitution, nor provides draft or pack animals with which one could cultivate the soil.

The most striking features of the people's appearance are: a dark brown skin color, long and dense hair growth, sometimes strong limbs, (but in some cases, especially women, their extremities, arms, legs, etc. are disproportionately thin) a high chest and a proud gait, in height they are equal to Europeans. Mentally, the natives are peaceful, friendly, obliging, open, uninhibited and honest; but they have one thing that is not commendable, namely laziness. What I have said here applies, of course, only in general, but there are many exceptions, and in general, sin in all its possible forms prevails among them, as their entire condition testifies. It is also known that infanticide among them, especially the killing of girls, was not uncommon, and in the case that the youngest was still at the breast when the youngest was born, it was considered an unavoidable necessity. However, one should not believe that the parents are devoid of all human feeling, oh no, but they cry and lament over each death for several days, and even the mothers, although they give their consent, can only forcibly snatch the little ones away, but as I said, they believe they cannot feed the children. However, this information is not based on my own experience, but on that of others.

Finally, we must also consider what the government has done for the indigenous people; as compensation for what has been taken from them. --

Firstly, a protector is employed to represent them before the government. The current one is called Wyatt, a friendly and pleasant man who, among other things, showed us our current accommodation. I want to admit that this government arrangement brings honor; but if it were so serious about the natives, it would not have assigned the protector two other duties.

Furthermore, an interpreter named CRONK is employed, who lives next to us. This man used to be a sailor and has no education at all, so we get no benefit from him. But the worst thing is, he exerts a bad moral influence on them; the people are very fond of him because he always jokes with them and, most importantly, because he gives them their bread. The government, in fact, distributes some bread to the natives, since all the game in the vicinity of Adelaide has been driven away. However, not enough for them to live on; they earn the rest by fetching water and wood from the whites. Moreover, a small piece of park or government land has been fenced off for the natives, and several huts made from split boards have been built there, along with a schoolhouse and a storeroom; but the natives only use their huts in extreme emergencies, when it rains heavily, because they can't move around in them due to fleas. These houses are reportedly going to be relocated to another place, but it's

highly doubtful whether the natives will retain a foot of land as their own property, as by law every inch of land must be sold, and the local government hardly has enough money for its own survival, let alone to buy land for the natives.

This is one of the renowned fruits of a self-sustaining colony.

I can't refrain from recounting an incident here that happened just today. The following case, which occurred just today, testifies to the tender love of parents for their children. A small child of the Kartammeru died, over which all those present wept so heartily and loudly that it was touching to watch and hear. The father held his child, wrapped in a kangaroo fur, on his lap, had his head covered with a blanket, and shed streams of tears, which were constantly replenished as others, one after the other, fell to their knees before him, held their faces over the child, and offered him a rich sacrifice of tears. The burial is to take place today, but they will go far away with the body, so we won't be able to attend, and the blacks don't seem to want us to either.

Oh, how powerfully this event reminds us of the Apostle's statement that the Gentiles are sad about death because they have no hope. Although we don't yet know whether the natives have a concept of the soul and immortality, we can infer from their excessive sadness that they must not have one, or if they do, they must not view death as an improvement of human existence. How death dominates the entire earth and all peoples. It's very distressing for us that our limited knowledge of the language still doesn't allow us to seize this present moment to discuss death, the immortality of the soul, and eternal life with the natives. However, we hope that before the end of half a year, God willing, we will be able to do so.

All I have said here about the indigenous people of South Australia refers to the Tandanjastamm and the few who occasionally come here from Ramony. We have no reliable information about the other tribes; if we cannot rely on the statements of the locals, especially regarding the number of tribe names, there must be many more tribes further inland. If we had the means to buy a horse or other pack animals to transport supplies, we would make a journey at least to the Murray to provide you with information about the number of tribes living there. We consider such a journey necessary, not because we don't have enough work here, but because we assume that the results of this journey would be of great help to you in choosing a destination for the other brothers. It already seems certain to us that the society must take into account not only the number, but also the separately living tribes of the indigenous people when assigning missionaries.

And with this, this message is concluded, until time and God's guidance allow us to provide you, beloved brothers in the Lord Jesus, with more complete and reliable reports. But may the God of grace and love, who has begun to visit this abandoned people, continue and complete his work through you and us. Amen.

Clamor Schürmann