

Temnants Creek

Sept 6. 01, FRAZER

(42)

My dear Frazer,

We are gradually getting to the end of our work or rather time at Temnants Creek when we have been kept very busy amongst the Warramunga tribe whose customs and beliefs are decidedly different from those of the more southern central tribes. It has been rather slow work but I think we have now got a fair idea of things.

The tribe is divided into 8 "classes" four belong to each moiety, one group of 4 forming the Ulu-uru and the other the Kingilli. The individual gets his totem in much the same way as in the Arunta but the 'totemic spots' are more strictly local. That is the totem places of

Terrace Creek
Elyria, Ohio

(24)

with the

the Ulu-won are their alcheringa
ancestors went into the ground on
the southern half of the area &
those of the Kingilli on the northern.
As a general rule but not by any
means absolutely so the son is of the
same totem as the father. A person
one totem is totem so is that of
his father & grandfather & that of
his mother unless it be given to him
by a member of the opposite moiety of
the tribe. They always speak of
totems as belonging to the Kingilli or
Ulu-won and curiously no totemic
ceremony of the Ulu-won can be
performed except with the permission
of the Kingilli and vice versa. The
Kingilli perform ceremony to increase
the food supply of the Ulu-won and
again vice versa. When the Kingilli
want black swans to increase for
example they ask an Ulu-won
man of the totem to perform and

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Terranto Creek

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decrate him for the purpose and so on right through. In some cases, but not in all, when the animal puts in its appearance it is collected and brought up to the man who made the ceremony & he tells the other people to eat it. In all cases his permission is first asked - that is when he performs the ceremony.

In the case of the great majority of totem the originator of the totemic group was an animal of the same name (or plant) who gave rise to what they call "mungai" that is special spots at which he performed ceremonies and brought forth from his body spirit individuals who now go into women & of course give rise to individuals of his totem.

We have got hold of one strange totem

LAURENCE
TENNANT
10 5/16/20

is best compared with the present day. It
was of huge size - about 100 miles
long - and the natives are very
proud of it. We have had a
long series of ceremonies connected
with it: the final object of which
was evidently to appease him and
keep him quiet in his water-hole
where he now lives. He threw
off any number of spirit children
in the Wingara (equivalent of
Aranta Alcheruiga) and formed a
very important totem. Unlike all
of the other totems there is no ceremony
to cause his increase but the
ceremony which do duty for this
purpose in other totems are evidently
more or less propitiatory in his
case.

that of a mythical water snake which
does not exist at the present day. It
was of huge size - about 100 miles
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interments, series of ceremonies connected
 with death & burial. They are
 wonderfully elaborate and as a man
 died while we were here we have
 seen every detail - the first burial
 in a tree - then burial of the bones
 (save one radius) in an ant hill
 after smashing up of the skull &
 the final burial, with a most
 picturesque & impressive ceremony,
 of the radius which was smashed
 in two & placed in a hole by
 the side of a drawing painted
 on the ground & connected with
 the totem. I don't think the
 drawing need be connected with
 the main one totem.

We have got the totemic - class
 system of two other tribes here and

in about ten days & worth but
only to weather condition & the fear
of flood in the far north shall
probably do little work until we
get to the gold district where we hope
to form a camp for 3 months
on the MacArthur River.

This morning after an all night
sitting we picked off a most
weird and picturesque fire
evening which is connected with a
kind of primitive form of
Sahoualia of an interesting
description. Old granules are
fully settled - the men pier
and ~~port~~ poke fun at one another
and no one may take offence at
anything said & done - even if a
man steal another person's food.
There & many other things we

have been at work upon and have also had a
trip out east amongst the ranges to visit the sacred
spots connected with the mythical water snake. The
natives give us no rest and it is all that we can
do to keep pace with them.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Fraser. I trust that you
are both well. We are begining to look forward
to the time when our faces will be turned homewards.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer.

Can't you get Gillin made an Hon. Fellow of the Anthropol. Inst.?
He deserves it if ever & any man out here did.
W.B.S.

Spencer's Creek
24th 1901