



NATIVE THROWING THE BOOMERENG.

It is grasped at one end in the right hand, and is thrown sickle-wise, either upwards into the air, or downwards so as to strike the ground at some distance from the thrower. In the first case it flies with a rotary motion, as its shape would indicate; after ascending to a great height in the air, it suddenly returns in an elliptical orbit to a spot near its starting-point. The natives in its use are enabled to strike objects which lie behind others with great precision, and to reach those near as if by a back-stroke, by throwing it at a particular angle. The diagram at the end of the chapter, exhibits the curves at the angles of 22° , 45° , and 65° , respectively, which I have obtained in making experiments with it. Some facts which were spoken of in its use, are remarkable. On throwing it downwards on the ground, it rebounds in a straight line, pursuing a ricochet motion until it strikes the object at which it is thrown. Birds and small animals are killed with it, and it is also used in killing ducks. The most singular curve described by it, is when thrown into the air, above the angle of 45° ; its flight is always then backwards, and the native who throws it stands with his back, instead of his face, to the object he is desirous of hitting. The diagram also exhibits its fall in case it loses its rotary motion. It is a favourite weapon with the natives, and is frequently seen ingeniously carved.

As a defence, they use a shield made of the thick bark of the gum tree; this they call hiclemara. It is peculiar in shape, and on the