

coast is three feet long by six or eight inches wide, with a handle in the centre; it is made rounding. Those in the interior are only a three-cornered piece of wood, with a hole on each side, through which the hand is thrust. The size of the latter is smaller, being only two feet long and three or four inches broad. It would seem almost impossible that so small a shield should be sufficient to guard the body of a man; and nothing but their quickness of eye and hand could make it of any value as a protection against the spear or club.

The mode in which the natives climb trees was considered extraordinary by those who witnessed it, although they had been accustomed to the feats of the Polynesians in the ascent of the cocoa nut trees. The Australians mount a tree four or five feet in diameter, both with rapidity and safety. As they climb they cut notches above them, with a stone or metal hatchet, large enough to admit two of their toes, which are inserted in them, and support their weight until other holes are cut.

The natives who reside upon the coast use canoes which are constructed as follows.

A gum tree that has a thick and tough bark is selected; this is girdled, and the bark slit so that by care a piece of it may be stripped from the tree large enough to make the canoe, which is usually about fourteen feet long and seven wide. This piece of bark is charred on the inside, after which it is folded in each end, so as to bring the edges of the two halves of the entire circuit of the bark together; in this position these edges are fastened by cords and wooden rivets. The simple canoe is now complete, is usually about three feet wide in the middle, and will convey half a dozen persons.

They use paddles of different sizes, say from two to five feet in length. In using the shorter kind, a paddle is held in each hand.

A fire is commonly carried upon a layer of gravel in the middle of the boat: a custom which appears to arise either from a natural or superstitious reluctance to be without a fire at any time. In this custom, as will be recollected, they resemble the Fuegians, who, however, far excel them in the art of constructing canoes.

The social system and intercourse of the Australians is regulated by custom alone. As no system of government exists, or any acknowledgment of power to enact laws, they are solely guided by old usage, and can give no account whatever of its origin. The universal reprobation of their associates, which follows a breach of ancient customs, has a strong tendency to preserve a strict observance of them. Many of these customs struck us as remarkable; those that have not been