

actually seen by the officers of the Expedition, have been described by persons entitled to the fullest credit.

The custom (to use the language of the settlers) "of making young men," is singular. The object of the institution seems to be to imprint forcibly upon the youth the rules and observances by which his after life is to be governed; and so strikingly are they adapted to insure good conduct, that it can hardly be believed that they could have originated among savages, such as the natives of Australia now are.

When the boys reach the age of fourteen, or that of puberty, the elders of the tribe prepare to initiate them into the privileges of manhood. A night or two previous, a dismal cry is heard in the woods, which the boys are told is the Bùlù calling for them. Thereupon all the men of the tribe set off for some secluded spot, previously fixed upon, taking with them the boys or youths to be initiated. No white man is allowed to be present, and the precise nature of the ceremony is therefore unknown; but it is certain that the ceremonies are designed to try their courage, fortitude, and the expertness of the boys in reference to their future employments in the chase and in war. There is probably some difference in these ceremonies among the different tribes. The Wellington station, or those of the interior, for instance, never knock out a front tooth, which is always done on the coast.

From the time the youths are initiated, they are required to yield implicit obedience to their elders. This is the only control that seems to prevail, and is very requisite to preserve order and harmony in their social intercourse, as well as to supply the place of distinctions of rank among them.

The youths are likewise restricted to articles of diet, not being allowed to eat eggs, fish, or any of the finer kinds of opossum or kangaroo. Their fare is consequently of a very poor description, but as they grow older these restrictions are removed, although at what age we have not learnt; but after having passed the middle age, they are entirely at liberty to partake of all. The purpose of this is thought to be not only to accustom them to a simple and hardy way of living, but also that they should provide for the aged, and not be allowed to appropriate all to themselves. Selfishness is therefore no part of their character, and all observers are struck with their custom of dividing any thing they may receive among each other, a disinterestedness that is seldom seen among civilized nations.

To protect the morals of the youths, they are forbidden from the time