

man my offerings—emu, kangaroo, and lizard—therefore Wye Wye shall be the lubra of Cardiddyo.”

Scarcely had the chief ceased when Gulcoonda, the old man, rose and brandished his boomerang.

“Nay!” he cried, fiercely, “Wye Wye is mine. I saved the maiden from the ‘kerditcher’ (evil spirit) when she drooped in the cold of the winter. I love the maiden, and she shall be mine.”

The old men whispered together in alarm for the medicine-man had strange powers.

Mooloolie, the young corroboree-maker, who had been hidden in the shadow of a mulga-tree, when he heard the words of his brother chiefs grasped the handle of his spear convulsively. His face grew grim with fury—the fury of a man who is suffering some great wrong. His strong frame quivered in his deep anger, until the veins stood out in knots on his copper-coloured brow. Then slowly over his features stole a look of despairing anguish.

“O mighty wise men,” he pleaded, excitedly, “I have sung many songs to the children of the Alberga, but my love is even greater than the voice of the corroboree. She whose eyes are brighter than the sunbeams on the waters—whose teeth are as white as the blossoms on the little blue bush by the river—she is my love, give her to me, O mighty men!”

The wise men nodded their old heads mysteriously, and murmured vaguely for some time.

Presently one among them rose. He was Nanyo, Wye Wye’s father.

“My picaninny quei (little girl) is a good lubra,” he said, “but shall the tribe come to blows over a quei? Nay the kerditcher (evil spirit) would dry up the waters of the Alberga, should blood be spilt for a lubra. Then, let each chief bring some proof of his great power to the wise men, and he who is mightiest let him keep my little girl!”

Then the wise men raised a great

shout of assent so loud and wild that the last of the little kadneys (lizards) on the river-bank scuttled far away into the cotton-bush out of sheer fright.

One morning Cardiddyo wandered through the scrubland, far from the camping-ground of his people. He walked for many miles without growing weary, as only a black man can walk.

When the twilight gathered over the desolate saltbush plain, and the great red moon threw flickering shadows on the Mulga trees, he gathered his spears around him and fell asleep in the hollow of a water-course.

Next day he travelled onward until at noon he stood on the top of a white gypsum hill. Here he built a wurley and remained many sunsets alone in the wilderness.

One morning he recognised on the summit of a distant mountain the smokes of three fires—one a narrow white smoke wreathing up between two dark smokes, clearly defined against the blue sky.

Cardiddyo laughed aloud for he recognised their import. “A long way away” (wonmunga goal bung). Heavy rains had fallen, and a flood of waters would pour down the Alberga. Cardiddyo returned to his tribe.

Alas! In the camping ground all was consternation and dismay. The people whispered to one another that Gulcoonda the medicine-man, had beheld the Evil Spirit, and he had prophesied that in another moon all the wise men should lie cold and dead. The black men and women rubbed white gypsum clay over their faces as a sign of their grief for they loved the aged fathers and wished them to live many moons. Only Cardiddyo laughed at the prophecy.

“Come!” he cried, “my power over the kerditcher is more powerful. Harken to me! I will call down the waters into the Alberga, where small pools lie dark and still. I will make the waters clear and beautiful.”