

THE COUNTRY OF THE SPIRIT BABIES.

When I was a very little ^{child} ~~girl~~, and that is a long time ago, some grown-ups must have told me ^(many) fairy stories which I loved, because I was a lonely child and wanted company to play with. All the stories told to me were of fairy children or fairy animals and birds and fairy trees that the little fairy spirits loved and played hide and seek, ⁱⁿ and small lizards ^{that looked "creaky Crawdaddies"} ~~that~~ were nice to every child who was a good child, who never hurt any of these little creatures that loved them. There were haunted bushes and lovely little flowering hollows in ^{those} ~~the~~ 'fairies' playground' where fairies might be seen sometimes by little girls who loved all little birds and animals and did not tease them.

Our dear Homeland which the "grown-ups" call ~~the~~ England ^(many) has little fairy places all over it. A place called "Cornwall" was full of magic, Hawthorn bushes and caves which must be shunned by little girls and boys; ^{There were} and other places called 'Wales', and 'Scotland', and 'Ireland', and the wonderful ^{"Isle} ~~tale~~ ^{MAN"} of the ~~man~~ who had three feet, ["] and many "hidey" places where little creatures only came out in the Moonlight. I was never afraid to go and look for them but I never saw any of them, though the stories about them were always entrancing to ^{hear} ~~me~~. They always came to me in dreams and often when I was being told a story, sitting by the window in the moonlight, I would see something floating or flying about and someone would say "they all love the moon and play about in her light" but I could only think I saw the shadow of their little wings.

All sorts of little fairy creatures were to be seen by children, and ^{these} stories ^{and} of fairy tales were kept in the minds and hearts of the "grown-ups" who had heard the stories from their own dear Mothers and Grandmothers; and I know if you were to go to-day to a Welsh place, called by a big name, "Peumadawr", there will be a little Welsh woman, veryvery old, who will be wearing a darling little white cap on her head and on top of the cap she wears a big black hat, and she will say in welcoming you "sith-^{er} ~~er~~ ee-duk", which means "how do you do", and you will say "thank you", and I am sure, if you ask her very nicely she will tell you a fairy story that ~~she~~ had been told when she was a little child like you.

If you love fairy stories, you will always listen to them even when you are growing old. And that is how I learnt this beautiful story of the little fairy black babies of their own land in the North West of this great

land of ~~A~~Australia that British people found for England. The story was told to me by Billingsgi, whose father, ~~Leoburn~~, ^{Lee'berry} owned the big area that is now known as "Broome" area, North West Australia.

Billingsgi was a Spirit Baby of "Jimbin", ~~the~~ fairy land that was owned by ~~the~~ little spirit babies called "Ngargalulla". In this Jimbin country the babies lived with all their little fairy brothers and sisters, and ^{fairy} ~~fairy~~ birds and animals and fishes and flowers and trees. Billingsgi was a little Ngargalulla baby there and all Jimbin land belonged to the Ngargalulla.

Grown-ups called Billingsgi's people "the black or dark people of Broome, North West Australia", ~~and~~ Billingsgi's people ^{owned} lived in the land his fathers called "Jajjala" ^{the} which white people call "Broome", but ^{Billingsgi's} his own baby land was the Ngargalulla country that all the little black babies come from and which they called "Jimbin". No ~~black~~ "grown-up" could see Jimbin except in dreams because the baby land was a special land, ~~and~~ underneath ^{Jajjala land} ~~the ground~~ and belonged to little Ngargalulla babies only.

Long, long ago a great ancestor called "Yammainga" made three countries, there was the "sky" country, (called "Koorrwall), the "ground" country, (Jajjala) and the "underground" country, (Jimbin), and it is of the Jimbin country that this story was told me by Billingsgi.

Jimbin was the beautiful home of all little baby spirits called Ngargalulla, and of all young baby ^{spirits} animals, baby birds, and baby fishes. There were little hills, and plains, and rivers and murmuring streams and lovely trees and flowers and grasses and seeds and fruits and by the little ^{streams} ~~streams~~ and pools the Ngargalulla sat and played with each other and with the tiny fishes and crabs and all the little creatures living along the banks, and all along the banks grew flowers and sweet smelling baby bushes. The flowers and sweet smelling plants opened their leaves and leaned down to touch the babies as they floated down the streams. All the little ^{spirits} birds sang and called to the Ngargalulla and they could go ^{up} and sit with the birds on the tree branches, or hide among the thickly leaved shrubs. The birds and tiny animals and reptiles would play with each other among the leaves and the Ngargalulla would float with the little sea birds along the creeks and streams, and when Ngargalulla came to the sea the little sea creatures came up to them and swam with them, for nothing ever hurt the Ngargalulla or the birds or animals. No anger, nor pain nor death, ever came to the fairy babies of Ngargalulla land.

There were no dark nights in Ngargalulla land. The sun, moon and stars sat down with the Ngargalulla and the little snakes, reptiles and turtles and all the sea creatures, played ^{jolly} ~~little~~ sea games with them.

No "grown-ups" could visit Ngargalulla land except in dreams. When Jajjala men dreamed of Ngargalulla land they saw the babies playing with land and sea creatures - going down with them to the bottom of the sea and floating among the deep sea fishes, and the babies would stroke their deep sea friends and swim ^{or dive} with them. A little Ngargalulla would join the porpoises and turtles in their play in the sea or on the beach and the birds would come and join the groups on the sea-beaches and wave their ^(wings & etc) little Ngargalulla friends to come and rest with them in the shady branches, and Ngargalulla and the birds would play at chasing each other round the flowers and all the flowers leaned over and touched their ~~little~~ baby friends and ^{all sorts of tiny sea creatures} ~~the little crabs would~~ ^{would} come up and play with them on the beach.

Ngargalulla land was filled with spirit babies and flowers and plants and all the young sea and land creatures were always round and about the babies and ^{all} the edible foods of tree and bush that grew in Jajjala country ^{were about} ~~above~~ them. When the flowers and all edible foods stopped growing in Jajjala land they all came down to Ngargalulla land until it was time to go up to Jajjala to open their leaves and flowers and fruits again. The little Ngargalulla could always see the land of their fathers, for spirit babies were free to go everywhere, in the sky, and under the sea, in all the trees and all around about and they also went up to Jajjala and saw their sisters and brothers, but the sisters and brothers could not see them as they were ^{spirit babies} ~~invisible~~. Every grown-up person in ^{Jajjala} ~~Kalbu~~ land was once a Ngargalulla baby belonging to Ngargalulla land and all the little ^{Spirit babies} ~~Ngargalulla~~ knew all this and knew all the grown-ups in ~~Kalbu~~ ^{Jajjala} land. When the Ngargalulla wanted to be a real earth baby he would ~~go up and~~ always chose ^{his} ~~their~~ own father and go to him in his dreams.

~~At~~ The Jajjala man would perhaps be sleeping and dreaming under a tree and in his dream he sees a little Ngargalulla standing close to him, and he says to the wee baby, "Who is your father?", and Ngargalulla says to him, "You are my father." Then the man who is to be his father looks round where the little Ngargalulla is standing and he sees some good edible foods or some young animals or vegetable or fruit tree. The father remembers everything he sees round and about and while he is noticing all these

things Ngargalulla goes over to where his future earthly mother lies asleep and going inside her he is carried by her until by and by he is born in Jajjala land a little dark baby. *The Jajjala men called all their little Ngargalulla babies "Lamma nalma"; which means "fair-haired".*

For a little while after he is born he remains a Ngargalulla, but ~~his mother rubs him daily with charcoal + lada (fat) to darken his wee body~~ only a little, little while; and one day he smiles at his earthly mother and then he is a spirit baby no more, but a wee little ^{Lamma} ^(Baby) Lamma-nalma (fair-haired baby)

Everything his father sees round and about the Ngargalulla in his dreams belongs to the little baby, ^{boy} his father knew where ^{all} these things are plentiful in Jajjala and he says, "Those things I saw when Ngargalulla came to me in my dreams are all my little son's Jalnga ^{"Totems"} and by and by when he is a big man he will dream the increase of all his grown-up people's foods, because that is the "spirit power" that every little spirit baby brings with it from Ngargalulla land to its earthly home *Jajjala.*

When Ngargalulla grows up to manhood and dreaming time, he dreams the increase of his "jalnga" foods and no-one else can dream them but himself for they belong to his own baby-ground and had been seen there by his own father whom he had chosen. If his "jalnga" were a favourite food of his father's people they would eat and eat ^{it, when it was ripe} (and come to him and say, "dream more, dream more", so that they could have plenty of it. If his Ngargalulla "jalnga" were some specially liked seed or vegetable or fruit he would dream he was in Jimbin land again sitting near his "jalnga" ^(and) and he would pluck the seeds, and chewing them ^{he} would scatter them all about him. By and by when his people and friends saw beautiful rays coming from the setting sun they would laugh happily and say "yeergili" seeds will be many". No little Ngargalulla who becomes an earth boy or girl ever hurt their Ngargalulla "jalnga" flowers or fruit or young of any animals or birds or reptiles that were their "jalnga" and so their jalnga foods were always plentiful.

No Jajjalaman could dream of a Ngargalulla baby unless he had a "ran'jee" (^aspirit or soul), within himself, and no man could claim a baby as his own if he did not ^{dream that} dream (the Ngargalulla came to him in his dreams. ^(broogaxi-dreams) When Wallungan of Jajjala accompanied a white man from ^{Broom} Jajjala to Perth in the early days of the white man's coming to Australia, he dreamed while in Perth that a Ngargalulla came to him and told him he was his father, and Wallungan looked around in his dreams and saw a great lot of "Wanjulain" (long edible bean) growing near the Ngargalulla. When he

returned to Jajjala some years later he knew the little boy his woman had carried was his own Ngargalulla dream baby.

All the Ngargalulla babies know all about their fathers' laws, and "avoidances," and "jalnga" ^(Totems) while they are Ngargalulla, and no Ngargalulla ever comes to the wrong father. If the dreaming man is a 'Boorong' man, Ngargalulla will say, "I am a 'Kaimera' and you are my 'Boorong' father", and if the dreaming man is a 'Kaimera' man the little Ngargalulla will say, "I am a 'Boorong' and you are my 'Kaimera' father," for "Kaimera" and "Boorong" are fathers and sons for ever.

The Jajjala men's marriage laws were very strict and if any man broke these laws he would be killed by his brothers.

Billingsgi, ~~who told me the Ngargalulla story~~ learned all ^{his} the lessons ^{from} of his Broome fathers. He must not speak to his young sisters or young mothers and they must never try to play with him. His big brothers and fathers, ^(uncles) and grandfathers all helped him to learn the Jajjala laws that were made for them all by the "Yammainga" spirits of long ago. The ~~men~~ ^{Small} made ~~toy~~ boomerangs and spears and spear-throwers and the boy learned ~~to~~ ^{to} swim and catch fish and throw boomerangs at birds or animals and so become a good man, able to kill animals and reptiles and great birds and big fish, and while he ~~is~~ ^{was} learning to do all these things he had to find the nests of the very small honey-flies or-bees that build nests in the tops of high trees and he ~~studied~~ ^{studied} the tracks of every living thing, ^{especially the tracks of Lang'oor (Opossum) because Lang'oor loved honey above all other Lang'oor food, & he liked to bring honey to the French fathers.}

Billingsgi was always learning and his teachers were always strict.

When he found honey bees' nests he ~~had to give~~ ^{gave} the honey to his fathers ^{or uncles,} ^(the honey bee was called ngoolbo) and grandfathers, and if he caught a big fish his grown-up relations ate it without sharing it with him.

He was a very little boy when he was taken into the young men's own camp and was separated for ever from his sisters and mothers and he had to find his own food, grubs and small animals or reptiles.

He became a great boomerang and spear-thrower, ~~and~~ all the grown-up Broome men made and played and hit with boomerangs without losing the animal or birds, ^{they} aimed at, ^{and he learned} ^{his} the man's place in the camps ^{from them.}

They played a great boomerang game of sending their boomerangs up to a great height, ~~and~~ manoeuvring the boomerang so that it gyrated flatly at a great height - one end being set alight so that each young flier knew his own weapon. The weapon that remained highest and kept longest in the upper air was the winner.

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The baby Ngargalulla in his fairy home of Ngargalulla land is the happiest little baby in all his world of fairies⁺ among all ~~his~~ ^{their his} companions. They all move about in the air or the deep sea or the sky or stars and frolic in the sea and the small creeks and in the flowering bushes round and about their fairy land, because they are spirit babies and the whole ^{spirit} land belongs to them and to their spirit friends the birds and animals and reptiles and all the sea creatures, ~~but~~ ^{never} they are ~~not~~ seen by their little earthly sisters and brothers. When they visit their earth country and when ~~an earthly~~ ^a grown-up sees or feels something that is not visible to ~~them~~ ^{him} he will say, "that must be a little baby Ngargalulla coming to see his sister or brother", and the man will pick up a leaf or flower bud and throw it in the air to them and say, "go and see your sisters and brothers".

In some quiet moonlight nights, after their day's hunting and having eaten their full of animals or birds, ^{she} or grubs, or seeds and soft fruits, which had been gathered for them by their women, the grandfathers and old fathers and brothers will ^{Sometimes} ~~often~~ remember their own Ngargalulla. ^(Baby time) They know all about their ~~the~~ fairy babies still in Ngargalulla land, and some old Tchamnoo (grandfather) will begin telling stories about Ngargalulla that his old grandfather told him when he was a little boy and these stories will be old, old stories and full of magic, ^{and he} ~~and she~~ will also tell stories of the big, big fish which his people know and which white people call "dugong", ^{they call Koor-doornglan} and the great, great "opossum-string nets" which they caught him with, ~~and~~ ^{up & down,} all the men bobbing up and down, in the deep water as the great sea fish tries to escape; and when they caught him at last they made a great fire to call all their friends to the feast and they would all eat and listen with much laughter ^{to} ~~over~~ the fight with the great fish, and all the younger men would whisper to each other "we will get ^{a Koor-doornglan by & by (baada)} a big fish too".

Koor-doornglan
And ~~then~~ there were stories of the "Waj'joonoo" the "great bats" that come in mobs to ^{Jajjala} ~~Kalbul~~ ^{to} land when they feast on the edible plants and fruits which were ripe for only a short season, and there would be great slaughter of these huge bats as they hung from the branches of the trees. And the big "Wangoor" (blue crane) that gave them the blue crane dance, and sometimes if grandfather was in a happy mood he would suddenly stand up and perform some light movements of the crane's graceful body, and the group round him would be keen listeners to the stories and by and by would imitate the movements of the crane dance.

When the old men told of the days of their own young manhood there was ~~always~~ always silence in the camp. The women and young girls sat apart from the men, and when some stories that the women must not hear were told, some older man amongst the men's group would call out just one word which might mean 'go away' or 'hide your head'; and another word might be said, ^{later} if the women were allowed to return and listen again to the stories.

The little Ngargalulla boy who had come to his father as a dream baby grew out of his babyhood very quickly. While still a very little boy he learned that all his mothers and sisters and grandmothers were not allowed to play with him, but had to feed him with fat grubs and other good foods. Very soon he ^{would be} ~~was~~ encouraged to go among the men and one of his father's younger brothers ^{would} thrust a small turkey bone through his nose and ^{tell} ~~told~~ him not to cry saying to him, that he would soon be a man like them, and they made him small boomerangs and spears because those are man's weapons, and these ^{small ones} were his own; and so ^{he} ~~began~~ ^{young men hood} his teaching. He was encouraged to go amongst the men and learn from them by contact with them, ~~and was less and less in the women's company.~~ His big brothers drew the tracks of every bird and animal and fish and he learned those lessons thoroughly and every little success was greeted with a shout of approval.

And so the little boy ^{learned} ~~was grounded~~ in the 'school' of his own people, through some nine hard and gruesome stages ^{before he could be a} ~~his initiation into full~~ ~~manhood.~~ ^{Worn'ba} "Worn'ba" (man)

His grandfathers encouraged him to seek their company and from them he heard many an ancient legend that had come down to them in "Yamminga time".

There were three special things they told him, but only after they had found that he had dreamed of being in Ngargalulla land and a little Ngargalulla had come before him and said, "You are my father".

He told his grandfather of his dream and his grandfather, 'Leeberr', knew now that his grandson had a "ranjee" ^(spirit, soul) and the older men gathered together and the young man learned the significance of this ^{soul} ~~power~~ within him, which enabled him to dream of Ngargalulla land and see the spirit babies there that would eventually come to him as his children.

There were two other kinds of "ranjee spirits." There was the ranjee or spirit of Thunder and Lightning which took male or female shape.

These ^{all} their marriage laws were kept throughout the centuries of their existence in Northern Australia.

Their ^{astronomical} ~~astronomical~~ legends were to them real stories of happenings and of people in "Yamminga" time. Their sacred and secret wooden and other emblems had ^{come down to them from their far off ancestors} ~~legendary foundations~~ and were extra-ordinarily interesting.

The most sacred of all emblems of the Jajjala men was the long carved ^{wooden} flat emblem called "kalleegooroo" and old 'Leebeer' and his people were the last custodians of these ~~legends~~ ^{ancient} emblems.

"Yamminga" in the long ago had made them a road to Koorwall ^(sky country, by) placing a long ^{long} Kalleegooroo between ^{Jajjala} Koorwall (earth) and Koorwall (sky) ^{and they} had three countries:- Jimbin which ^{was} ~~is~~ Ngargalulla land; ^{Jajjala their own} Koolpa - (earth or ground, and Koorwall ^{sky ground} ~~sky ground~~) ^{The Sky Country.}

Women ^{went up and down the Koorwall road to find food for their men, and young women and children also went up and down the} ~~Kalleegooroo~~ ^{sky} road, but they had to be back either ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ Jajjala, or Koorwall country before sunset. They could sleep at either place, but they must not stop half way on the Koorwall road. They found good food in the Koorwall country and always either reached Koorwall where they could stay the night or ^{return to} Jajjala booroo, but ^{they} must not ^{sleep sit down} ~~rest~~ on the road.

One day a big group of women and young girls and children started ~~rather~~ ^{Koorwall} for Koorwall, but they ^{lingered} on the way, so that they were only half way when they saw the ^(walga tchimbin - sun going underground) sun about to hide itself. The women were too lazy to hurry, and as they always carried ^{their} firestick ~~when hunting~~ they said,

"we will sleep here and go on to Koorwall to-morrow" and they lighted the fire, & the fire burned ^{the} "Kalleegooroo" ^{road} & broke it in two, & those ~~who~~ ^{who} were on the Koorwall side had to remain there forever, & those who were on the Jajjala road ^{never} ~~never~~ came back to Jajjala booroo (ground).

All the Jajjala men ^{now} know that the dark spot in the Milky Way is that part of the Kalleegooroo road ~~to Koorwall~~ to Koorwall. ^{where the women had burnt} the Yamminga road. ^{could hear this} No boys ~~are told~~ the story until they ^{had} become

^{Thaloor gurra} ^{grandfathers} fathers of the Ngargalulla & Jiri-babies

1/1. In Ngargalulla land the big turtle called Koolibal was the great playmate of the Ngargalulla and often ^a ~~the~~ little Ngargalulla would go into the sea and come back with Koolibal, and a great many little babies would jump upon him and fly over him and lie down with him and he would put our his head and move round and round and have great ^{games} ~~play~~ with his little ~~Ngargalulla~~. Koolibal, ^{which} (the white people call the great green turtle, loved his little Ngargalulla friends and would often go back with ~~the~~ ^{them} into the sea and all the little fish and crab friends would play too ~~with~~ ^{it} ~~It~~ was always playtime in Ngargalulla land. ^{The Sijjala men} They ^(forget) (never ~~forget~~ they ^(always dreamed the) were (Ngargalulla ^{babies} even when they were old old men, and they increased their food "jalnga" so that the ^{Sijjala} ~~Kalbu~~ land men had always plenty of fruit and honey and nuts and roots, and every fruit and seed and vegetable ^(animal) in all ^{Sijjala} ~~Kalbu~~ land belonged to the men who ^{had once been} ~~were~~ all once Ngargalulla, ^{babies} ~~and~~ ^{they} were ^{always} glad to dream the increase of sweet growing foods, ~~and were always dreaming the increase of their foods.~~

Their Ngargalulla dream home was always in their hearts, ~~and often their~~

~~big brothers and fathers would tell some special dream they had and would tell their dreams in the moonlight.~~ The Ngargalulla country was just the same as ^{Sijjala} ~~Kalbu~~ country ^{where} ~~when~~ their fathers had all the foods and seeds and honey and berries, but ^{these foods} ~~they~~ had to be increased by dreaming and all the men must keep ^(Yamminga) the laws and never do any wrong. ^(spirit, soul) The little Ngargalulla ranjee remained inside them even when they became very old men, [&] ~~They~~ were always happy to dream they were in their baby country ~~and~~ watching the Ngargalulla play with Koolibal ^(turtle) or ^{Pajjalburra} ~~Pajjalburra~~ (porpoise). ^{Pajja}

Sometimes when an old man dreamed he was in Ngargalulla land, he would see a great number of dead ^(Pajjalburra) ~~fish~~ on the beach and when he woke from his dream he remembered the dead fish he saw and he told it to the old men and the old men knew there was going to be a death amongst them - they whispered to each other and said "Burndoor will die", for Burndoor had the porpoise as his "jalnga" and the "jalnga" goes away before its owner, the man, dies.