

CHAPTER XI.

LAWS OF MARRIAGE.

THE laws of marriage among the aborigines are remarkably well devised; and exhibit a method and ingenuity which could not have been looked for among a people who were so long considered the lowest of the human race.

The object of these laws is to prevent marriages between those of 'one flesh'—'Tow'wil yerr.'

As has been shown in the first chapter, the aborigines are divided into tribes. Every person is considered to belong to his father's tribe, and cannot marry into it. Besides this division, there is another which is made solely for the purpose of preventing marriages with *maternal* relatives. The aborigines are everywhere divided into classes; and everyone is considered to belong to his mother's class, and cannot marry into it in any tribe, as all of the same class are considered brothers and sisters.

There are five classes in all the tribes of the Western District, and these take their names from certain animals—the long-billed cockatoo, kuurokeetch; the pelican, kartpœrapp; the banksian cockatoo, kappatch; the boa snake, kirtuuk; and the quail, kuunamit.

According to their classes the aborigines are distinguished, as—

- Kuurokeetch, male; kuurokaheear, female.
- Kartpœrapp, male; kartpœrapp heear, female.
- Kappatch, male; kappahahear, female.
- Kirtuuk, male; kirtuuk heear, female.
- Kuunamit, male; kuunamit heear, female.

Kuurokeetch and kartpœrapp, however, are so related, that they are looked upon as sister classes, and no marriage between them is permitted. It is the same between kappatch and kirtuuk; but as kuunamit is not so related, it can marry into any class but its own. Thus a kuurokeetch may marry a kappahahear, a kirtuuk heear, or a kuunamit heear, but cannot marry a kuurokaheear or a kartpœrapp heear. A kappatch may marry a kuurokaheear, a kartpœrapp heear, or a kuunamit heear, but cannot marry a kappahahear or a kirtuuk heear. A