

TURAWAN

A legend of the Dream-time as told by the Lane Cove tribe of New South Wales.

Long ago an eaglehawk, Mullion, has his nest in a very large tree. The eaglehawk would swoop down from his nest, and catching a blackfellow from the nearby tribe, fly off with him. This continued for a long time and the blacks were unable to help themselves, because the tree was of enormous girth at the base, and reached almost to the sky.

In despair the elders of the tribe called on two wise doctors, Murriwunda and Koomba, to assist them. These two wise men held a meeting to find a way of dealing with Mullion the eaglehawk, and decided that the best way would be to climb the tree, carrying a

piece of burning wood with them, and set Mullion's nest on fire.

Koomba was the first to make the attempt, but after climbing to a great height, became exhausted and fell to the ground. When he revived Koomba said to Murriwunda, "I went a great distance but you are lighter than I am and may be able to reach the nest."

Murriwunda, although he went higher than Koomba also fell, and was seriously hurt.

The elders, bitterly disappointed at the failure of the wise men, called on their friend Turawan for help.

Turawan agreed, and calling together all his feathered brothers, divided them into groups.

One group carried firesticks in their beaks, while the remainder fought an aerial battle with Mullion.

Thus while Turawan's scouts and dive bombers chased Mullion away, the others burned his nest and the tree, to the ground.

Who is Turawan? I forgot to tell you, he is the Grey Magpie of Australia, and even today he will swoop on his enemies, and drive them off by using his powerful wings and terrible beak.