Propr H. Baldwin Spencer
The University
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Dear Sir,

I have before me your favor of 19 Feb last together with reprinted account of the Ceremony for which I thank you. I had already perused this account in the Report of the Horn Expedition which I obtained in Melbourne when coming to S Africa. First to deal with my little publication which you have read. As you would readily recognize it laid no claim whatever to anything but a popular discourse on the subject. It was in fact a reprint from several articles written for the Manchester weekly Mercury and as such bears many imperfections both as to style, plan and strict scientific exactness.

A copy of this publication reached the hands of Mr Andrew Lang. He wrote relative to it in Longmans of October 96. He also wrote me suggesting my undertaking a properly constructed essay on the Bota Ceremony with full details.
authorities - this work I immediately took in hand and had completed about 500 pp. 1846.
when circumstances arose which compelled me to seek to better my fortunes in the part of the world. I brought the hill over here with me together with all or most of my works of reference in Ethnology etc. but the struggle for existence has been too keen for me to allow my thoughts or energies to wander from the strict path of duty to those who are dependent upon me - this fact has caused me much disappointment from one point of view - I have however partially satisfied my desire in the direction of Ethnology by being able to my various trips in different parts of S. Africa, to collect about 50 exceedingly interesting examples of Bushman Cave paintings. - These I procured some from Dr. Bles's papers in Cape Town which I arranged & indexed & noted for the Cape Town Library & for his daughter & others from Mr. D. and Mr. Schum's records & from my own observations of examples in caves.
These again I have not had time to write up or fair copy for publication. My friend Dr. F. D. Maloney wrote me for information on Zululand customs, and again I have been unable for some reason to send him. I am writing myself beforehand in order that you may gather that it is not for lack of interest but for other reasons that I cannot write you to great length upon the sacrificial portion of the Boza Ceremony. There is no doubt whatever in my mind that this killing and sacrifice eating of the victim at certain Boza Ceremonies did actually take place. I spent a lot of time and money in endeavoring to establish the fact beyond dispute but could obtain secondary evidence only upon the point. Four Aborigines with whom I conversed upon the subject did not deny it, but by evading my questions — practically admitted them. My first informant was an elderly man (who had absolutely no knowledge of the great importance of the fact if it existed) and who...
had not read anything on similar rites. This
man (Miller) obtained the secret from an aborigine
on the barrow in the fifties or early sixties. To my
knowledge no white man has seen the rite. It
would on account of its nature be most feebly
guarded — an old aborigine head-man from
the Naraun District, a Kamilaroi admitted the
fact to me. I gave me further information.
I got into his confidence by showing him the
Booroo sign & giving him the two words for
Kangaroo. He thought we are initiates to a
certain extent. From this old man I got
much information on the subject of the
gibbers or magic stones also mentioned by
you in your letter I Report. All my notes
are with me here but require a great deal
of reworking & editing. This work I cannot
honestly attempt to do at present — however I
shall seize the first opportunity & ship
them into some shape & add them to what
I have already written & send them to
you. The matter is one of such great
importance that I could not merely throw
my material together, that it cannot aside for lack of proper care being exercised here. My financial losses, combined with a general distress for the country have turned my eyes back to Australia. If I receive letters containing any commercial offer in reply to my inquiries, I shall return to make the best of a huge mistake - if I do return I shall have the greatest pleasure in introducing you to learning a conversation in the subject. I have given you more information in this letter than you asked for, but less than I should have wished on the subject. You must desire to hear why I should have done the first & do not know, but you may put it down to the fact that I have not looked at the folder brought for over 5 months. Any matters pertaining to the subject, upon which you wish information & which are at your service.