

Christ Church, Oxford

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17 July 1900



~~THE COLLEGE~~  
~~READING~~

My dear Spencer,

Your interesting letter reached me last winter soon after my return from Africa, and, as you may imagine, struck many responsive chords. About the Empire and the bush you wrote precisely the feelings with which I came home. On the whole, a camp by a stream a hundred miles from the nearest white man must take one equally far from Oxford, whether it be in Australia or Africa. And there are some striking similarities in those two particular continents. Africa, also, has "very-leaved scrub"

such as you describe - it is of  
Arctic type - and it has a long  
rolling plain with no water.  
The chief differences, I suppose,  
are in the fact numbers of big  
mammals, the difficulties with  
grain bills and the human  
portage. By the way you have  
a Kenya professor of mine in  
your new colleague, Gregory. We  
are expecting him home this  
Autumn to make Antarctic  
preparations.

All that you tell me of  
your work in Greenland sounds  
most fascinating. I had heard

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something of it from Jan Kratoch.  
~~He~~ I was dining with him the  
other night and he described you  
as the big scientific man (of the  
Kratoch type) in Antarctica.

Although my time is  
spent here, my work has ~~had~~  
been out of the East. He '32 I was  
sent to found a College at Reading,  
which I am still working from.  
Oxford. It has now a staff  
of 40 and is affiliated to the  
University here. The building of it  
has given me a delightful  
partnership with a little group  
of men embarked in the same  
boat - for just mixed enterprise.  
And now the University has  
handed over to me the old  
Ashmolean Building - or rather



the greater part of it, and has  
given me ~~the~~ an assistant and  
two lecturers for my geographical  
work here. Pioneering in Oxford  
is slower work than with you, but  
I hope for results.

Did you know Morrison, the Times  
correspondent at Peking? He was a  
Melbourne man. I sat vis-a-vis with  
him from Aden to Marseilles last  
Autumn and found him an excellent  
companion. I last heard from him  
from Colombo, when he was on his  
way <sup>back</sup> to Peking via Melbourne. From  
our latest news I suppose he and  
the rest of the Europeans must be  
taken as dead. You Australians ought  
to be as deeply interested in China  
as in S. Africa.

May I congratulate you with  
all my heart on your F.R.S. and, though  
it has been out a long time now, on

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Your book on the Australian natives.  
Many thanks for the papers about  
the Horn expedition. I sent you  
a paper of mine on the Kenya  
expedition by way of acknowledgment.

Bourne has been away from  
Oxford of late, serving with his  
Militia, which is embodied in  
Ireland. Selator was home from  
the Cape a short time ago, but  
I missed him as I did you. His  
father comes to see ~~us~~ us here  
occasionally & gives me flourishing  
accounts of him. Waggott - do  
you remember him? - is a Cortley  
Father - a curious fact for a first  
in Animal Morphology. But he is  
a very interesting man - knew Romanes  
very intimately - and has missionised  
at the Cape. Jackson (Hatchett) is  
Acland's successor at the Ratcliffe  
Library - he is an odd fellow.



Old Acland is evidently quite broken. He is still driven about Oxford - a mere skeleton and quite shrivelled, supported on cushions & by a nurse.

If you come to England, let me know beforehand. We shall be delighted to welcome you. Eighteen months ago, I ~~sent~~ ~~you~~ searched for you everywhere on behalf of the Education Department, but you had just started for Melbourne. Professor Morris writes that he showed you a letter from me last spring, so you know the possibility of my coming your way on the globe.

Yours very sincerely

J. Mackinder

P.S. Someone told me the other day that they had found your and my names together in a Black Forest hotel book!