Brisbane  
2 April 1902

My dear Spencer,

Many thanks for yours of March 26th, and for the MSS returned—and with which I am glad you were pleased.

Re calling upon their namesake, I will try and get further particulars, and see if I can trace it any further up the coast.

I candidly admit now—as I did to you personally on the Chango, that there are traces of their totemic emblem, but I can assure you that they are mighty difficult to get hold of. Whether on the other hand, what we do find in north Queensland, in an archaic form (since highly developed and specialized in Central Australia) or the last remnants of a complete system once practised all over the continent, is a matter I suppose.
which cannot be decided upon at present with any degree of certainty. I can assure you, however, that I will try and find out all I can.

Re the natives and the white men - is a matter that has also puzzled me. They certainly had the idea with the first advent of the whites. I spent my earliest holidays with the Petries - Mr. Thor. Petrie of Kholit Poo who came out as a boy in 1837 - to gather some information about the old Brisbane Aborigines - of which tribe only two are now known. It was the old gentleman's brother who discovered "Darawelboi" (Davis, the Convict) on the Mary River. I think he said, "Hop, Mr. Thor. Petrie told me that he often spoke with this Davis about the blacks; he had been living with all those years, the latter explaining how the blacks had received him as one of their own warriors returned. The same idea is also prevalent all up the coast and in the peninsula, and it has often occurred to me that the idea may have originally arisen through pre-historic contact with the now Guinean and Torres Strait Papuans who are certainly of a much lighter colour than the aboriginals. These Papuans - we have evidence of this - certainly did come a long way down the Queensland coast following reef to reef. By means of the systems of intercommunication, it therefore seems to me possible that the blacks were acquainted with a lighter-coloured race - which was confirmed with the advent of the whites. Though the smile may not be exact, I certainly see a similarity. It is only from the fact of the idea of whites springing up from blacks being so deep-rooted, that some explanation ought to be sought: the idea seems too universal to cast it aside without suspicion. Of course, you know the other explanation which is also feasible - from what I know in the north regarding the
treatment of the corpse—(skinning, singeing the flesh). By the by, Tom Petrie told me another very interesting thing about "Darambouri," which was to the effect that though he had been scarred—by similar means and fashion—as the natives amongst whom he lived—none of his scars were raised. Indeed, I have never seen yet a European with a true "Keloid"—this seems to confirm me in my conviction that there must be something different (probably physiological) between the two kinds of skin.

Again, Tom Petrie tells me that the old Brisbane Blacks used to explain a k.c. child by reckoning that the mother must have been covered by a rugger when wearing a white shirt!

I agree with you about the ventriloquium business, and will omit it: at the same time I am satisfied with Keilor's statement of the affair, but with you am satisfied that it must have been done by natives who were more or less civilized in contact with white.
The account of the origin of man — the making of an artificial man — was obtained in the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Normanby, — Prince Charlotte Bay (East Coast).

No. I have got nothing in the shape of Daramulam or Baliama. As to Andrew Lang, I was very annoyed to see the way in which he had twisted my "Nulka" of Boulia into a sort of Supreme Deity. I was not writing on Early Religion, and only in order to explain the context, described him as a supreme supernatural beneficent being 861 — or something after that strain — but as you desire to say, Lang must needs "read into it much more than was justifiable."

Yes: I was much amused with the Adelaide 3-column
interview. I am only too anxious to see the whole completed work.

My bulletin on "Game," is now going through the press. I am taking up my Superstition M.S.S. on my long trip - and will get it all in order within the next few months.

By the by, the Mine. Department are sending up a geologist (and surveyor combined) with me - and on the whole we ought to do some good work. I am very anxious to see and describe the underground (hollowed out) dwellings on Alleyn Island (one of the Wellerley group) in the Gulf of Carpenteria.

With all good wishes, and trusting to hear from you soon.

Always Sincerely yours,

Walter E. Rott