My dear Spencer,

I have just returned from the very heart of the Peninsula, where, in conjunction with the Commissioner of Police, I have been holding a magisterial inquest into some murder cases. We have been a month away, and hence a large amount of official correspondence has accumulated, and unfortunately, this must be answered! Hence, I pray you excuse my not writing to you now as fully as I could have wished.

So, we never got across to the Bellvue, and I must candidly admit that I have never come across any 'unlaw nature' of the Mitchell; they are still a very wild lot, and only a couple of months ago surrounded at night a mounted police party consisting of eight or ten people fully armed. Fortunately, no lives were lost on either side. On the other hand, it is on the mouth of the river, or somewhere in its immediate neighbourhood, that I hope Bishop White will see his way to making a missionary settlement.

I spent a good deal of my time on the Batavia and became familiar with some extraordinary beliefs among the people there. 
in a certain way, with those described by you from Central Australia — e.g. the bringing of the "soul," &c. from hole, &c. in the rocks, where they had been placed by various Beings. Similar things were met with on the Eastern coast. However, in the short space of a letter, there is no scope to describe all these curiosities; and hence, so soon as my MSS. is completed, | \nwill send you a life written copy and shall be glad of any foot-note, or suggestions that you may care to make. I have already made reference to you in one or two places, but very incompletely.

I quite agree with you as to Andrew Lang drawing conclusions almost those from writings other than those intended by their authors. To my great surprise, in my own particular case, because of my having (just for the sake of explaining matters) a little) method Société Méthari (amongst the Bouliablocks) as being a supernatural power who makes everything, &c. — Lang, in the course of an address which was sent to me, brought this statement forward as tantamount to proof that these nations believed in a Supreme God.

I see that there must be an interesting discussion going on now concerning the question of Totemism (left off by Haddon) before the Anthropologists meeting in the old country. Duff's book, in l'Année Sociologique (so I am informed) has been fighting the theory that the Aztecs are primitive — as regards their totemic superstitions. So far as I am personally concerned, I doubt
If we shall ever arrive at the true origin of
telemaic, or what power for it out there in Australia.
But to return. I cannot help smiling
at your views of missionary work in Queensland.
As I would appear equally ridiculous in your
eyes were I to express an opinion on a subject of
which I know nothing! In North Queensland
—and I speak from personal knowledge (as ignorant
of what goes on in the southern portion of the State)—
the primary object has not been that of teaching
amongst the blacks a knowledge of so-called Xhima
idea which they cannot understand, and one a
very secondary idea has been that of teaching them
under altered conditions to earn their own living.
A perusal of my Annual Report which I am for-
warding by this mail, may perhaps interest you, dears,
as it deals with the results of my inspection of the
different missions. I look upon these stations rather
as workhouses—no work, no feed!—and am always
urging upon the superintendents the danger of
over-educating the blacks under their charge. I am
basing and organizing all my work up here on
the statement and belief that
(a) in the struggle for existence, the black cannot
Compete with the white.
(b) it is not desirable that he should mix with the
white.
(3) With advancing civilization, the black will die out.

(4) While he lives, the black should be protected from the abuses to which he is subjected by the whites. Of course, you must remember that the Protector’s duties here are very different from what they are in other states: they are not the issue of rations, or blankets (which are distributed by the Police).

Then again, you appear to be labouring under a most misapprehension as to the status, etc. of the missionaries. I am only speaking of N. Australia. Certainly, 4 out of the 5 superintendents are men of intellectual ability, and all have gone through a special course of training before being appointed to their billets. There is no “panpering” or “pampering” of the blacks going on by these men. I can assure you as much. Less is there anything going on by the Government. As compared with Victoria, our Executive spends (approximately) £7,000 on 25,000 blacks; compared with £5,000 is spent by you on about 400!

My experience of the Roman Catholic Church out here is a very different one to yours. Noticing that our stations up here were run only by Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Lutherans, I made a point of approaching
the then head of the R.C. Church out here — the Bishop (I think he called himself) and asking whether that denomination could not see their way to opening a Station like all the others. The reply I got was something to this effect: "We have gone into the matter thoroughly, but are of opinion that the spiritual and temporal benefits derivable therefrom, do not warrant the initial expenditure." It wasn't bad, was it?

Yes, I have been 15% off my screw: I could make much more in private practice, but I love my scientific work too much to chuck it now. I sincerely trust that these bad times have made no difference with you and yours.

By the by, did you ever get a sketch-map from me concerning the geographical boundary of the N.T. and Queensland border tribes?

I am longing to have a good old chat with you — I wonder when that will be though! At any rate let me congratulate you already on your book — and don't you forget to send me a copy.

The wife has just come in, and said that I
am writing to you. She wants me to say that she cannot understand whether anything has gone wrong with her letters to Mrs. Spencer and sends love to her and the children. With kind remembrance to you and all of yours from me.

Believe me,

Always sincerely yours,

Walter E. Roth

I hope I shall succeed in removing your bias to our scanners: for the sake of old friendship's sake. I know you won't hesitate to talk as straight to me as I have to you! Besides, if we can't have dispute or any little difference of opinion, what's the good of being pals? Doesn't Terence somewhere say

"Quis relae amoris amoris renovitiae?"