

Ilamurta  
9<sup>th</sup> Oct 1896

Dear Professor.

Whatever befalls you in this land of heat & blasphemy you will surely welcome it as a change & relief after your solid drudgery of the past year; you will find Gillen "on Aborigines" in his den very restful & soporific and can snore to your hearts desire once he gets well into the subject.

Touching Gill Range. I was out there a good deal last month, chiefly on top of it & was thoroughly disgusted with the appearance of the whole place, there appears to have been no rain there at all since

you & I were there before & certainly not for the last 12 or 18 months. Reedy Hole & the Kathleen which used to be fairly pretty little spots are as bare as a board, all the fern & weeds eaten or trampled to pieces by the Cattle, I don't think you would even recognize Reedy Hole. Higgers being driven in from the Sandhills were slaughtering a bit, Martin & I tracked them for three days on foot & got to the old hags of the party & later in same day we saw the rest of the party carrying beef up the Range, we expected them to run into us nicely but after a long delay we found they were cooking it under that big Cliff just west of Penny Sp<sup>?</sup> & when we tried to get down to where they were, they must have heard us or two outposts who

swamp-bushes were posted 300 yards  
 off on the Porcupine Hills to watch  
 against interruption may have  
 seen us - anyway the look had dis-  
 -appeared hurriedly when we dropped  
 over the last ledge leaving two  
 whole cows cooking in the fire,  
 you will know the spot when I tell  
 you it was right at the 'Cycads' &  
 know how awkward a spot it was  
 to reach from on top. I saw one rat  
 hop out of a little cave we camped  
 in one night & would have liked to  
 secure him but it was dark & we  
 dare not light a fire for fear of  
 being seen or smelt. In the book you  
 are writing in collaboration with F.H.  
 I hope you will take cognizance of  
 the aborigine appetite when he has  
 food in the bush. I calculate that  
 the average of every man, woman,

& child is 20 to 30 lbs of beef p day.  
 This is no exaggeration good-bodies only  
 know what the bucks actually eat,  
 because of course the children can't  
 eat their allowance of the average.  
 You see every time they wade up through  
 the night they gorge & if it makes them  
 sick they can start again the next  
 moment on an empty stomach.  
 At the same time they can do a  
 starve with anyone. If information  
 on the subject is of any use to you  
 I shall be happy to give it to you  
 when we meet. I was greatly grieved  
 to hear of the Commissioner's death  
 he was a genuine personal friend  
 to me. I do not know anything of  
 his successor & now also Gillen's  
 brother has gone, he wrote me a few  
 lines just after it occurred & the  
 poor old chap was terribly upset.

I shall expect to hear from you definitely shortly after you get to Alice Sp<sup>ce</sup> as to the date I am to be at Alice Sp<sup>ce</sup>. Kelly will send out a boy with your letter. I don't want to be hanging round A.L. longer than I can possibly avoid. On meeting with you, I will place myself under your orders & we will go where it suits you best. Kelly tells me that Comm<sup>r</sup> Peterswald was very anxious that your trip should be a success & that he would wire me when you left Adelaide. My sister, Mrs Symon is very anxious that I should go down & go to West Aus<sup>tralia</sup> but I feel that I am better off here. in any case I will have to go to Adelaide early in the year & see the Father who the girls tell me is not looking extra well - what I mostly dread

is the army of nephews & nieces & cousins far & near that I will see & have to be amiable to. Very many thanks indeed for the "Narrative" I have only glimpsed at it & will give you my candid criticism on it when I have gone through it properly. From what I saw of it I don't fancy it is exactly a true tale of what occurred, too flattering in parts & lacks vividity to a Norwest reader.

The illustrations are beautiful & I think Red Bank Forge & Glen Helen Forge two of the best. I think you had better bring a pair of thick india rubber soled tennis shoes with you (not with stitched soles) as you will find them excellent for walking on the Rocks with & in slippery places, the stitched sole ones cut too quickly.

Our gold prospects were healthy  
at last news but you will have  
heard later developments from  
Pado. I don't think there is any-  
-thing else to write about today  
so I will close trusting that we  
will soon meet & have a pleasant  
trip - Let me know as soon as  
you can from Alice & Co as to  
when I am to be there & with  
best wishes

Believe me

Yours sincerely

Ernest C. Cole  
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