

Illamurta

10th June 1899

My dear Professor.

Yours of 17th Apr^e
 which I see you posted at Carlton
 on 10th May reached me tonight
 the mail was four days late &
 as it will go back on its usual
 day I have only a little over
 24 hours to answer something
 over forty letters some of which
 must go by the board. I had already
 read the Bulletin Critique - got it
 at the Bend on my way back
 after writing to you from Char-
 -lotte Waters. I did not like his
 remarks on the style at all for

I knew you were writing purely for the Scientific World & not the Bulletin readers who rather run to swaddle by Harry Stockdale & others in "Aboriginalities" etc but I would much have liked to have seen the writer whom Gillen told me was a very able man, tackle it on facts. he ought to know as much on that subject as the authorities you quote at all events for even you will admit that all Australian Aborigines customs are not similar although perhaps they may have much in common take the instance of the Boomerang^{ing} returning to the thrower, which you mention. I have no doubt that most scientific people are firmly convinced that all abor-

-iques have the power but as you
 say, they do not do so in this
 Country at all. As a boy, in Victoria
 I saw them bringing it back frequently
 in 1876, on the Murray about
 Mildura in 1880 & also some of
 the Cooper's-Breed Blacks were very
 expert, I will certainly enquire
 into the evolution of it from the
 straight stick but on the Cooper
 they used both - another thing is
 what became of all the stone axes
 that they had on the Fence in years
 gone by - I can't get hold of them
 although I know they used them
 not so long ago & I know they
 used to get them somewhere near
 that Narman's Camp where you
 I photographed that Libra. The part
 that handles in one is the growth
 of the new cult of Spencer &

Gillenism" so to say, on the
 Native as a human being. I do
 not talk of their traditions or rites
 because I firmly believe you went
 deeper into them & more correctly
 than anyone ever will again but
 do you honestly think you and
 Gillen saw any Natives as ordin-
 -ary beings - wherever either of
~~them~~ you met them, were
 they not always on their good be-
 -haviour (outside tribal rites etc) with
 with the perfect confidence that
 they would be rewarded with
 tobaccos or flour etc? did you see
 from personal observation if they
 were ~~severe~~, cruel or inhuman
 You seem to have a sympathy
 with secondarism of the "Arabi"
 type & look on them as heroes
 for leading the others astray - such

Blacks I cannot have any sympathy for but when it is a case of an uncivilized one I would always be lenient because perhaps he might not understand the white man's ways. Any one reading about Arunta Blacks might easily be led to believe that they only wanted wings & haloes (vide J. G. last report & lectures to Switches Blacks when being sentenced) but he knows perfectly well that it is on account of so many people about those more settled Stations & Hear that was properly instilled into them that keeps them from cattle killing. it is not so many years ago since they were worse than ever these Switches have been & they were not cured by gool. You must

bear in mind that there was
 no Protector about Alice Sp^{rs} &
 most people in the Country had
 some good reason to keep the Native
 subdued. I am not advocating
 shooting for a moment in the
 so called good old style but they
 should be made to respect the
 law of the land that has been
 taken from them & it would be
 better for them - as for whites kill-
 -ing their emus & kangaroos etc.
 Alice Sp^{rs} is the only place where
 this is done, one might say and
 the carcass is nearly always
 given to the Blacks but if it
 has been skinned in most
 cases the Blacks won't trouble
 to cook the carcasses because
 thanks to the advent of the
 White man they are not hungry

you saw an instance of this at
 Crown Point. A stock phrase
 of the cult is "Put yourself in
 the Blackfellow's Place" - well suppose
 you & Gillen put yourselves
 for a while in the "squatter's
 place" you rent the country
 & if the Government does not
 prevent the blacks destroying your
 property wholesale, do you not
 think you would feel inclined
 to do so. I don't know you well
 enough to positively swear what
 you would do but I am certain
 the blood of Gillen's ancestors
 would rise and that of his
~~could~~ coloured brethren fall.
 in his case & he would cry out
 pretty loudly - By the way
 Field & I had each a wagen

with Gillen before he left Alice
 Sp^r - he bet us each that neither
 you nor he would reap a penny
 profit from the great wool in
 five years - I pondered over this
 a good deal & have now come
 to the conclusion that Lang, Tyler,
 Frazer & Co must have been
 very, very, expensive. I wish
 you would tell him this. He ad-
 vertise it here. I am perhaps
 bitter on the Native question again
 tonight - my two best boys ran
 away a few days ago. Nab after
 being with me four years and
Jack six years, of course there
 was a woman in it - Nab, I
 considered old enough to have
 a lubra of his own & told him
 that whenever he got a right on

he could have her + live with her
but as the one he wanted had gone
down below the foyder, he said leave
her - he knew the rules of the Camp
that I allowed no one to sleep with
lubras here black or white as I know
from dearly bought experience
that a young blackfellow with a
lutra is utterly useless for our
work + yet I found he was sneaking
+ camping with one here which
he had told me was a wrong one
for him - I hunted her off the place
the banged him round and a
little later he said he wanted
to go too. I thought he wanted to
go at once + caught hold of him
+ said alright I'll let you go but
I'll straighten you up first
but this was because he knew

thoroughly well that I had impressed
on them all that I would let them
go at any time if they told me
but that if I had punished any
of them & they wanted to go then
they must wait till I got someone
to replace them. he told me he
would wait till I got another
boy & I explained thoroughly to
him quietly & dispassionately
why he had been punished &
that I had looked on him to
set the others an example and
he said I had always told him
straight & that he knew I would
have told him to take this tubra
altogether if he had told me that
her relations now would over-
-look the consanguinity (not
extra close) I thought he was

really convinced of his error & intended letting him stay here about a month and then letting him go away altogether if he so desired when he was cool. I don't know if I have made this clear to you that they are perfectly at liberty to have intercourse when they play together because then they can not go to extremes as they can when sleeping together for I may assure you that the young natives away from the tribal control, with a lubra of his own is immoral in the extreme. I considered Nab quite old enough to have a lubra but he preferred to deceive me although he knew my promise was as sacred as my word that a transgressor would be

~~scolded~~ punished & I felt that if I had overlooked his offence, my influence over them would be gone. he would either think that I was frightened to do it or that he was invaluable and you will see that it would have had a bad effect on the other ones. so much for his case. The other boy, Jack, is not yet circumcised & ran away from his friends when they wished to perform the ceremony he was spelling from 1st March to about 12th May and being found in full braids by us during that time. came back here of his own accord on that date & then ran away with Nab. The pair of them reached the Mission Station that afternoon. got a lubra to go

up to the Station & get these
guis to come down to the Creek
quid & told them I was camped
there & wanted them. The gin
Jack was after, he had followed
out from Alice Sp^o to the Mission
when she came out with Mr^o
Nyers (who was confined that
night) & the pair then made
into the Ranges & over A.S. way.
You see these semi-civilized
boys talk together. Ours have
been in there too much this
last twelve months and seen
the slackness of discipline at
other places & that if a boy got
a job at the Police there or Telegraph
he could keep any gin he had
managed to get, you see it is
a gain to the tribe in one way and

reprimands don't occur as they
used to. The old men can't
straighten up these boys as they
used to & it is only out back
where you see the, young fellows
keeping to their correct camps
till their wives are handed to
them. It is bitterly cold & later
won't I have to write tomorrow
I feel half inclined to throw
this in the fire but on one or
two occasions you have been
pleased to say that our blacks
are properly treated and that
is why I have told you so much
tonight. I know that if I have
been strict at times with
the boys that I look after them
in sickness & feed them on a
scale & style different to any-
where else, expect them to come

to me when anything is wrong & rely on fair play but deceit is in hate in them somehow. if I had given that a good hiding when he came up as I should have done & then said "now go away if you want to" it would have been alright & the others would have further understood that I would keep my word about allowing no boy to lean in anger. you can understand how if that was allowed, every time one checked or had to speak sharply to a black he would want to go & in a place like this we would be stranded, they are the first that ever served me this way at all events & I will bring them back sooner or later. This is probably the last time I will worry you on the

subject of blacks as beings - my next will be on them as Dreamers - I hope now to have a little quietness till Snider returns & if I get that & feel best I will go down the Sandhill way to Eldanda get fairly pure native that way if I can come on a lot, there are a good few somewhere about E of Egers Rock I fancy & it is only odd ones that visit the mps. Racehorse's lubra "Coomba" died the other day - much to Coulthard & my sorrow & Coulthard tells me that Racehorse cried like a white man over it - he was to come to me for consolation after a trip out somewhere. I like him & nearly all the Sen blacks who have behaved splendidly while

The Cattle have been up there, now they are all being brought back to Lempe but I must go up & take them some good conduct reward soon. I tried hard to get a photo of an aged couple here the other day but I am afraid I failed - they were agreeable in every way but very unsteady on their pins & I could not get them to stand in one position while I pulled out the dark slide, anyway I'll develop them after mail goes. Have you seen G. yet? I am anxious to get at the papers & see what he has been up to. I got one slip where he has been giving his opinion on the Mineral Wealth of Cent. Australia & the Railway etc.

Please thank Mrs Spence for
her kind enquiries & tell her I
am well - & believe yourself that
I get well from rheumatics occ-
asionally. With kindest regards
to you both.

Believe me

Yours very affect^{ly}
C. West. Cowle