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Mlamurta

28th May 1900

My dear Spencer.

turned

Yours of Ap^e 11th

turned up about three weeks ago
evidently crossing one of mine.
I could not possibly reply & in a
line to K, asked him to tell you
so. on this occasion I am taking
time by the wool. I told you I was
going to the Mission to get Jado or
boy tried. The boy got a whipping and
Jado was sentenced to 6 months. I
brought him here & shod up a lot
of horses and started away South
to try & get him some companions

but had an unsuccessful trip.
 We did not see a sign of any
 tracks till we got over 100 miles
 from here about 50 miles West of
 Joyder (Coolida) Sp^d & a bit S.E. of
 what I took to be McCounst. The
 ones I wanted had been about
 here & boxed with a lot of others
 from further South, we tracked them
 to one or two dry clay pans & then
 had to give it up & make back
 for water, I would have liked to
 have gone on as they were evidently
 making a young man (the tractors
 pointed out where they had been bossing
 him up etc) but I had never been
 in that part of the Country before &
 feared the water they might make
 to might be impracticable for already
 thirsty horses. as it was, at one

place we carried water out of a gorge for over two hours & the only other waters were Native Wells in grounds something like that at Kamran's Well. we lost a day at each of a couple of them cleaning them out & found they made about 10 Gallons per hour or say 1 to 1 1/2 horses rather slow you can guess, with their head to water. saw three other wells we did not use & no doubt there are plenty of others scattered about if one had a good guide. don't seem to be any good waters about the scattered Ranges. the most eventful occurrence was when we tried to cut off a corner by crossing an apparently safe arm of a lake, all went well till we reached the far side & I was just congratulating

myself when all the horses went down flop. the saddle men struggled back onto safe grounds with the loose ones but the heavy packs anchored the others, took off everything & got out two. your friend "Maiphe" would not make an effort & I felt inclined to shoot the pig, we had to clear his legs out of being (oh so salt) mud & then roll him over & over with the sureingler, even when he reaches good grounds, he would not trust himself to stand up for a good bit. As soon as I got home I started Barlow off down home with Jaso & since that, I have been here reading up the accumulated papers & doing odd jobs, nursing a smart twinge or two of rheumatico etc

We had two or three nice showers since I wrote you and all the Country could not well look better although the rain was a trifle late. Martin has got nearly all his cattle off Tempe & onto Heubury & is trying to sell the horses & station now for very little. Just before we went to the Mission eleven blacks including "Meena-murtyna" came over to Tempe one night from Ayers Rock way & speared an old man, left him rather bristly with 8 spears in him. (I believe he was sleeping with two others whom they first woke up) they also wanted "Arabi" but the devil took after his own for I told you he had gone out George Gill Range way

the reason was that these two had killed one of their mates close to Tempe a couple of years ago. We do not interfere in these matters but they killed a couple of beasts as they were going back on ^{Dried} Creek plain so I'll have to look them up soon.

I note your remarks re Cassia & Eremophilas etc & I am sending you some of the Palm seeds (*Livistonia Mar*) & some of the seeds of that *Tecoma Australis* at least that is what I think you call it, the thing that the back joint of the spears is made of with a pithy centre & grows near Rocks. the clusters of flowers are large & pretty, creamy coloured with brownish centre, flowers about size of *Eremophila*

I will get Lycas first chance, or also others. I am sending you a specimen of a poisonous creeper which appears to attach itself to the prickly Tribulus & wish you would give me its name. I have not seen it growing here myself but the Missionaries attribute the death of a lot of their sheep to it just after the rain.


I have not got anything in the nigger line lately, or since I wrote to you, too good a season I reckon at present, I had the old fellows up here for a day or two & tried to get some information from them but their yarns are a bit incoherent to do & they do not seem able to tell you ^{why} things were always done. I will probably

copy out my notes soon & send them to you. I believe that every water hole Spring, Plain, Hill, Big tree Big Road, Gullers & every peculiar or striking feature in the Country, not even leaving out Saushillo ^{without any exception whatsoever} is connected with some tradition & that if one has the right black at that place, they could account for its presence there. you may recollect when we left Atzacotla & camped before photographing Chambo Pillar with the telescopes, we went on next day & came to some a box water course (caused by flood escaping from a dike without a keel a lot of pumby little hills (Crows that came from Jay etc) we had dinner at two little hills on a creek. (the break thrown away) & so on & on steadily

almost to account for two bright
 stars in the sky. You of course
 know the sort of thing. It seems
 to me that Alcheringa blacks of
 say Kangaroo totem, these fed on
 Kangaroos, now the difficulty
 comes in that these Kangaroo
 totem men sometimes assumed
 the actual shape of Kangaroos
 (see Undeara notes) Snakes or Emus
 etc likewise & it is difficult to tell
 when they were feeding on their ordinary
 totemic food or eating each other
 cannibalistically. I am not using
 the ~~name~~ totemic names as you
 do in your word like Erlic (Emu)
 men, Achilpa (wild cat men) but
 I think you will see what I mean.
 the Erlic Men or men of Emu Totem
 lived principally on Emus. This
~~men~~

does not come in always for I have
 a churinga of blue crane totem or
 this one & others travelled with
 Mulgah seed men & fed on Mulgah
 seeds. I think I told you about the
 set of circumcisional articles

I got - Pootas - Peni
 Aldingwita - Testicles.
 Ill-ying-a-pooler - Foresteria
 Lallira - Stone knife
 Im-itch-ev-idnilla gum tree bark
 Stone - Nanja of Twantina -
 Udnuwiteha of the grass seed
 totem.

These are just sufficiently like the articles
 they are supposed to represent to be
 recognizable. The stone knife is  flat
 like that, & the stone representing the
 piece of gum tree bark is not unlike
 the shape a burnt flake often assumes.
 In this case it was a woman of the
beard totem that was burning the
 articles off a lot of Ulladupera totem

not far from where you & I saw
 Walter Parde after leaving "Mudcreek"
 & it was a grass seed taken on a
 who shows them the Gallia & gave
 them some. This man came from
 between Doctor Stone's & McDermott's
 varies a little from the Allen's
 version but I suppose each lot
 differ a bit - it is your friend
 "Mungitunda" that looks after these
 & brought them to me. When the
 old fellows were here before I just
 wrapped a piece of paper on each
 stick as - kangaroo from 'Mudcreek'
 Kangaroo from Atkara. Kangaroo
 from Edraconna & so on to see if there
 was any hunting about the chumna
 they had fetched but the three who came
 this time never failed in the slightest degree
 in re-identifying them which is a

sure thing when one cannot see
 any difference in a probably per-
 fectly plain stick with considerable
 grease on it. I may send you an
 untuned print of a photo I made of
 them. The individual pictures were
 failures. I fancy the heat spoilt some
 of my plates or the gelatine on them
 during the summer.

Whooping cough very bad at Mission
 & I know six little ones died there
 recently, and a lot of old bleeds have
 a sort of cold. I can't keep them here
 & they will not food after themselves
 unless under your immediate eye.
 My own keeps well & I often try to
 explain the theory of germs to them
 but I fear they food on me as a
 Munchausen & ascribe disease to
 evil influence of others although


they needon I pulled them through the measles & kept them from any deaths which occurred at nearly every other place. War still dragging on in spite of Roberts presence, I do so hope Mafeking gets saved in time. Pado writes occasionally & is well but a bit down just now over shares like myself. I put every penny in them & if I had sold out on the top prices, could have stood behind about £2000. now not a quarter of it. never mind they may go up again. Jillen wrote me a long letter by same mail as yours & I think likes Moonta in reality & is taking a leading part in local affairs by the aid of a Magic Lantern & a glib tongue. I needon his

success at Alice's^o is not much
 liked & for some reason has his
 knife into Gillen on every occasion.
 I have not been there since poor
 old Gillen left & don't often hear
 any news of the place. Things
 very mixed at the Police Camp
 there. Well I suppose you will be
 pretty full of me before you
 get this far so I hope you are
 well & shut up. may add more
 after mail. I hope Mr. Spencer
 & Miss Dorothy get out safely &
 a pleasant trip.

Yours sincerely
 Ernest Cowle

Over

Over

7. 6. 00. Your letter came yesterday, so I'll add a bit to this long streak. Glas the churina got to you safely. They are not 'Mlouti' as you seem to say. They are 'Kollitcha' this is a bush something like an Acacia only with smaller dark green leaves & grows a little purple fruit  of nice flavour & glutinous if I recollect aright, blades are very fond of it but I have never seen it South of Glen Helen gorge & it ripens about Apr or May. I will send a specimen when I go that way.

I see what you say about Native Collections and agree with you as to the best place for their final resting spots. I hope you did not think I meant anything

personal in my remarks, I wrote pretty briefly to the Pontiff when I heard he had sold part of his for such a big sum, not because he made money out of them if he felt that way, but on account of his sacking always that they should not be taken from the blacks and that he was only getting them purely in the interests of science & all the while holding out both his hands & a carpet bag for every thing he could get. I know when he said the trustees had wires to him, I replied why don't you say Spencer wires & he says one good turn by advising the Adelaide people to buy his now (Spencer's) & that if

he had said straight out at the start that he might make something out of them it would have been alright see. I also see that you have sent Rose £20 for me to lay out. This should be ample for a good bit although I did not mean you to do that when I wrote. I meant it was a pity you had not done it ages ago before the blacks parted with so many things to Tom, Dick & Harry as they have done and that a lot could have been got cheaply at the start before the more civilized ones taught them to put a higher price on things. I told you in a previous part of this that the market was slack at present owing to a

good season but can only say
 I'll do what I can. the guileless
 native though when he really knows
 one is in the market shapes
 somewhat thus. 1st, several
 churenia, all blacks liberally
 rewarded. 2nd visit, about half
 a dozen turn up with perhaps
 a couple of churenia & when it
 comes to payment each produces
 a good sized sack & can't under-
 stand that there is a limit to
 flour & the purchasing power
 of each ancestor. consequent
 disappointment. I presume you
 want all the churenia I can get
 both wooden & stone, and any other
 nigger weapons & gear whatever
 that is genuine. or is there a
 limit to the number of boomerangs

Hommeras, Pitchis etc - I was collecting a few things myself but will knock off & get Rod's to send me about \$10 worth of stuff & leave the balance in his hands for cartage etc. All we see how we get on - Anyhow don't send any more money because I could have financed the concern & settled easily enough with you.

Guts, Spiciner, Uttnirringhita, "Urcharda" - are only obtainable now in unrecognizable cooked forms, apparently keep well, will send Atngim-ata (with kitly proper) by & bye. & will see if there is an Uttnirringhita bush in flower near about Camp before mail day.

Thanks for sending prints to Kelly. I have some spirits -

I still hear from old Winnecke regularly, I do not think he has missed more than one mail since 1894. Papers seem full of baboon & the Appeal Clause in the Commonwealth Bill. my talented brother-in-law Lynch seems to be in hot water all round & of course is right - his advocacy & support of Kingston in spite of the bitter feeling between the pair of them will please the feller immensely and draw us very close together. No more just now old man, dm a bit twinging in the shins. With best wishes! Yours sincerely
Charles Cowle

Shall I write out the notes on Churina I got here & see if you can connect them with any others - one I think relates to the origin of the Fridge River.