

of Alice Springs  
January 31<sup>st</sup> 1896

My dear Spencer  
Many thanks for your  
splendid budget record - per-  
haps I have so much to say  
that I hardly know where to  
begin - after I read your last  
letter I would have given a  
letter to be along with it just  
to give you, in a vigorous  
best volume, a bit of my  
mind in return for your  
gratulant attack upon my  
writings that arrogant assumption  
of superiority so characteristic  
of your big game journalism  
you speak at the Irish table about  
the "Irish table" & crack  
with the Americans

Why on earth you found it  
necessary to drag the Irish  
in also I can't for the life  
of me understand except it be  
that with true British instincts  
~~it is~~ ~~their~~ characteristic want  
of generosity you can't miss an  
opportunity of sneering at a  
subject race. It is the intolerable  
sneering air of superiority that  
makes the name of England  
stick in the nostrils of the  
hot blooded & sensitive Celt who  
will sooner or later exact a  
terrible vengeance. You thank God  
that you ~~had~~ are an Englishman  
I thank God that I am not,  
I have no ambition to belong  
to such a <sup>race</sup> ~~nation~~ of Hypocrites  
As for your three headed dog

Salisbury he has not been first  
 Minister in the Office before all  
 Europe is in an uproar. The  
 British Lion shows his teeth but  
 everyone, even you who are steeped  
 in prejudice, know that those teeth  
 are only decayed stumps & the  
 poor old brute cannot bite.  
 The stumps are good enough to  
~~the~~ crush huggers armed with  
 weapons less dangerous than  
 peashooters & that's about all they  
 are good for - You told about  
 40 000 000 of Americans hating  
 England this my dear fellow  
 is the purest nonsense & you  
 must know it is. A truly British  
 Coedahoodle doo Coedahoodle doo  
 Coedahoodle doo runs through several  
 pages of your last letter, yours again

Jingo my dear Professor a fine  
Created old time Tory Jingo at heart  
that when you return to your  
beloved England (and I hope you  
proper place amongst the scientists  
of Europe) you will be a  
distinct danger to the peace of  
the country, you will, when not  
engaged on a new manuscript which  
my boys Brian or Balfour Baldwin  
Lanndon have sent you, be lecturing  
and writing about the stability  
of the Empire with a very big E  
the awful ingratitude of those  
Hottentots like Irish and clamouring  
for more warships Bah! I  
can't keep my temper I shall  
grow abusive if I don't stop  
Why oh why is it that all  
my friends have out pruned  
Tories d — n em

I've had a good mode to feel better  
 Perameles Aurata natives name  
 'Mulgaruquiora' scoops out a shallow  
 hole on the surface of the ground  
 just sufficiently large to lie in, ~~then~~  
 & thatches it with grass, herbs, & twigs  
 I have not been able to procure  
 a cat skin to send this mail  
 but think I can promise you  
 one next mail. The skin I sent  
 you last mail was full sized  
 At bottom of tin, which I am  
 sending by parcels post, you  
 will find a beast very like the Perameles  
 aurata, but larger. The natives  
 call it Quiora & say it is a  
 different species to the Perameles,  
 in the same tin you will find  
 a couple of Phas: mac: & I think  
 apicalis. The latter are plentiful here

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The huggers call them Etlichüchka.  
Let me know if you want any  
more of them - Berkeley tells  
me the Peramela is plenty found  
at Tameants Creek but I can  
get you some more here if  
necessary - They are found on  
the Burt plain. None of these  
The leg in Ten is I think  
a species of Nephurus (not  
sure of spelling) but it differs  
from the others <sup>and of course</sup> the colour of  
the eyes being very light gray  
with black streaks, it is also  
much larger than I have seen  
before, in the Ten you will  
also find two young Ocherta  
taken from the pouch of  
the mother whose skin head  
&c preserved with salt and

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alumn I am sending in separate parcel. it is from the late of this animal that the Niggers made "Alpeata" mentioned in Illapuviraja notes, with the skin you will find glass tubes containing a strange looking reptile which does not appear to me to be either snake or earth worm the Niggers call it Maachinna & say that it is the Mother of a large black ant-called yira from whose hole in the ground it emerges after rain. I don't say it will prove to be some commonplace thing for it does not appear to be my best to get you any thing of real value - You will also find in this parcel, specimens of various

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alum I am sending in separate parcel. it is from the last of this animal that the Niggers made "Alpecta" mentioned in Illapuviraja notes, with the skin you will find glass tubes containing a strange looking reptile which does not appear to me to be either snake or Earth worm the Niggers call it Maachinna & say that it is the Mother of a large black ant-called yvira from whose hole in the ground it emerges after rain. I doubt if it will prove to be some commonplace thing for it does not appear to be my best to get you any thing of real value - You will also find in this parcel, specimens of various

articles mentioned on Ethnological  
notes it is as well for you  
to have these things at hand in  
case you should find it necessary to  
to describe them minutely &  
besides you will be able to give  
them their proper names and  
uses in your collection - In  
separate box you will find  
a trumpet - "Ulpivra" decorated for  
ceremonial purposes & as when used  
for Charming Luras, it is now  
a fine specimen that I could  
not resist the temptation of  
sending it to you by post  
although I had already sent  
one in case with other things.  
I am also sending Kirdatcha &  
Illapuvinja negatives with the  
other negatives you require for

Horn Volume - except these viz  
 two young Arracoweta -  
 Men & Arracoweta  
 whose figure arms folded  
 these are with Parker & House in  
 Adeline & I have most Sterling  
 to get them & send on to  
 you - Let me know name of  
 Ocherita & other things. Have a  
 few lizards etc which can go  
 with other things next mail when  
 I hope to have some beads from  
 the Barren & Tennant to send you  
 I have enlisted Mr McKay who was  
 here for Christmas & has given  
 him some Spirits - by the way  
 what has become of the Spirit you  
 mentioned that you were sending  
 through Fogarty I have heard nothing  
 about it - If you have not sent

any I shall be reduced to  
 dry sailing things presently -  
 Sterling wrote me lengthily by  
 last mail & it is easy to see  
 that the old chap does not  
 feel particularly happy about  
 the Horn separation he says  
 "I assume from your letter  
 that you give me full power  
 to insist on such conditions  
 as I think necessary in the  
 publication of your paper  
 there are conditions that I am  
 making with regard to my own  
 for after all we do the worst  
 & shall get all the blame or  
 credit when Horn gets all the  
 credit of there is any & none of  
 the blame" in replying this  
 morning I told him to withdraw

my notes if he withdraws his own  
& to make any conditions if he thinks  
necessary for our mutual protection  
I was surprised to learn from  
Winneds letter that he has  
definitely refused to contribute  
anything to the volume, he  
appears to regret very much  
that he could not oblige you  
in the matter but says that  
he had arranged with the  
Royal Geographical Society to  
publish - this fact of his now  
doing this will make it  
obvious to everyone that there  
has been a quarrel. Will the  
book appear mapless? (Will  
it ever appear? I am becoming  
doubtful) It is quite possible  
that Huggers is at the Charlotte

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use a different lizard to test just  
Rhodona types for Kirdantcha  
purpose. I did not think of  
asking them. By this mail  
Studing sent me about 20  
questions about the beaches,  
all of a trivial nature, except  
one wherein he wanted to  
know if I could not give  
him some information about  
the Northern Class systems.  
I replied to all the questions  
by wire as requested here that  
relating to Class systems thus  
I declined to supply to, this  
is the sort of thing he wanted  
information about. The male  
nature I believe share their  
Is it obligatory? at what age is  
it done? Who does it? how?

at first I thought of declining  
 to give information but after  
 thinking the matter over I came  
 to the conclusion that as the  
 questions only related to trivial  
 matters of detail it was not worth  
 while refusing. I am posting you  
 class systems of the Kitcheria  
 & Wavamunga tribes. These I  
 gathered from members of  
 those tribes who were here  
 during our Christmas & New  
 Carnival since then I have  
 used copies to the Burrows  
 & Tennant that they checked  
 You will see that they  
 are the same as the Kitcheria.  
 The 8 classes of which the  
 missionaries spoke is the class  
 system of the Kitcheria which

I was surprised to find  
 is rapidly being adopted  
 throughout the McDowell Range  
 the blacks tell me that they  
 first began to adopt it  
 some fifteen years ago - after  
 I had left here to go to  
 Charlotte Waters & that during  
 the last two or three years  
 it has almost come into  
 general use - Questioned as  
 to why they should adopt  
 the system of another tribe  
 my old Alawit says "that  
 one very good to him make one  
 walk straight" The blacks about  
 the Mission district <sup>& Eastern McDowells</sup> who mixed  
 a great deal with the Chiricua  
 were the first to adopt the  
 system - If you compare my

Arunta table of relationships now  
the right class system you will  
trac see at a glance how  
it simplifies matters. I think  
the fact of theseuggers  
being in the very act of  
~~the~~ changing their system is  
a most interesting discovery  
and I shall be most anxious  
to hear what you think of  
it - In writing to Corle some  
time ~~ago~~ after the Races I  
mentioned that there were eight  
classes at the Missionaries that  
I had worked out their class system  
I do hope he will tell Sterling  
this, at any rate I don't think he  
will be able to work out the  
system in time for Sterling to  
use ~~on~~ it in his notes - Sterling

has been hammering away at  
 him mail after mail about the  
 class system ever since your party  
 left him. I think I told you when  
 in Melbourne that I had heard  
 from various <sup>Travis</sup> sources that the  
 Looitcha natives of Tempe Down  
 had no class ~~apt.~~ or marriage  
 systems that they married promiscuously  
 without regard to relationships or  
 anything else. I always doubted this  
 until I got hold of a missionary  
 native, an intelligent chap whom  
 I have permanently annexed, he  
 assured me the Looitcha of whom  
 he had a fair knowledge were  
 "all some wild dog him catchem  
 him Sister. jump up longa one  
 fellow mother" after hearing this  
 I wrote to Corle whom I trust

was under the impression that they had no system similar to the Arunta (We had talked the matter over here) and asked him to find out all about it he replied "I believe these blacks have the same system as the Temants Creek natives but I cant say yet for certain what the system is" Now I think he has got hold of Natives from the Missionary district with their 8 classes & has not taken care to distinguish between the two tribes Arunta & Lorrcha. I have been him this & am awaiting his reply with a considerable degree of interest. Martin of Pemp (Dorns) brought in an intelligent Lorrcha man who has been a great deal amongst the whites & I have

had him in the question  
 bore for a week & failed to  
 elicit anything pointing to  
 the existence of a class system  
 amongst his people. He  
 asserted time after time  
 that he could taste any  
 man as his wife even his  
 own sister & that he knows  
 of cases amongst his people  
 where this had been done he  
 told me that children were always  
 eaten when killed & that the  
 tribes also eat their enemies  
 when they were fortunate enough  
 to kill them. I have asked Martin  
 to find out on the spot if  
 a certain couple who are living  
 together at Temple Downs are  
 brother & sister in blood I know

The couple referred to some of  
 the Temple Downs men assured  
 me that they were Brothers  
 & Sister in fact - we know what  
 you think of all this - is  
 there any trace without a  
 class system of some sort  
 known to Messrs Horitt & Fison  
 - The Urapinna notes are  
 the result of three long  
 days spent with a man  
 of that tribe who rejoices  
 in the possession of one  
 actual wife & three  
 pirangam. - I have not had  
 time to go through Mr  
 Horrell's paper to see how  
 far my account of the  
 custom corresponds with his  
 of the Pierri but the

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man has some knowledge of the  
Deiri he says the custom is  
the same in both tribes though  
the language is almost entirely  
different. I think you will  
be pleased with the tabus  
of relationship particularly with  
the Arunta by means of which  
we shall be able to determine  
the actual relationship of  
the officials of the Initiatory  
and other ceremonies. You  
cannot but be struck with  
the different systems obtaining  
in both tribes - With regard  
to Pirangam in the Arunta  
all I have been able to find  
out so far is that those  
who are Pirangam to each  
other must also be born Uruwa

These tables of relationship are  
deeper than any of the  
rest of my work & will I  
think throw much light  
upon the whole question.  
The Paramount business appears  
to me to be a very  
simple arrangement there  
is nothing at all involved  
about it. You ask if it is  
not possible to get Byrne  
to make some enquiries,  
quite possible, but I do not  
care to ask anyone to  
help me in my work.  
I originated this business  
& I want to carry it  
through as far as possible  
unaided, except by you  
who are my colleague in

the worst a division of labor  
would destroy my interest  
in the whole thing. I think  
you will understand my feeling  
in the matter if I put it  
to you this way. If you  
had discovered a new manuscript  
would you call in a scientific  
friend to assist you in  
describing it if you felt  
that you could do the  
work yourself? Of course  
if I find it absolutely  
<sup>necessary</sup> to make use of other men  
I shall do so but at  
present I prefer what they  
call in French "a lone hand"  
I don't mind being responsible  
for my own inaccuracies but  
I don't care about undertaking

& publishing those of my friends -  
 to resort to the Pirangam  
 business. My Urupuma  
 friend tells me that the fact  
 of his having Pirangam  
 does not entitle him to  
 the use of Pirangam women  
 in other groups or tribes,  
 he is only entitled to the  
 use of his own Pirangam  
 & he cannot lend her to  
 another man unless she  
 is willing. - It is however  
 customary for men to lend  
 their Pirangam to their  
 younger <sup>visiting</sup> tribal brethren. He  
 admits to having asked Aunã  
 friends at Macumba for the  
 loan of Pirangam & sometimes he  
 has been supplied with a Pirangam

Sometimes with one of the  
 actual wives of a friend -  
 he says he would not ask  
 a man for the loan of his  
 wife unless he had more  
 than one - ~~it~~ it would he says  
 be greedy to do so - With regard  
 to disposal of widows in the  
 Urapinna, I have noted the  
 notes & fancy I forgot to  
 mention that they become the  
 property of a younger brother,  
 who may if he chooses decline  
 to take them in which case  
 they are disposed of by the  
 tribal Neethis - Now then we  
 have these two tables of relationship  
 I fancy we can claim to have  
 unraveled the systems of the  
 tribes from Sturgill Springs on the

South to Powell's Creek and  
 the North I have as far as  
 possible replied to your  
 questions by this mail & you  
 will see that I have gained  
 some more very interesting  
 information about the ceremonies  
 attached to borrowing Choosings  
 as Mr. Faxon remarked one  
 never knows when one gets  
 to the bed rock with these  
 people. I am sorry that I  
 have not been able to get  
 anything new about the  
 Ram Oednannashila. You are  
 quite right in saying that  
 perhaps it would be more  
 correct to say Water Totem  
 if it really is a Water totem  
 for the Katoos have no word

meaning rain they merely say  
 Cwatêha Utlimna<sup>is</sup> water falling  
 Cwatêha willima water running  
 . They call the <sup>(water)</sup> Oeknamakella  
 "Cwatêha" - I shall of course  
 continue my inquiries on the  
 subject & if anything has  
 turned up I will let you know  
 You will notice in Urapuna  
 notes that ~~the~~ the men of  
 the Cloud ~~to~~ make rain  
 this man had never seen  
 the ceremony he says it  
 is mainly performed  
 from what I gathered myself on  
 the way up & from what  
 he tells me utter demoralization has  
 set in amongst the Urapuna  
 & Arunta where they come together,  
 they were, during the construction

† Don't handle  
his statement public  
or I should put myself  
in hot water  
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of the Railway in the hands  
 & under the influence of  
 something like 1500 Maricis †  
 many of them died from  
 typhoid & other diseases &  
 now they are setting aside  
 their ancient tribal laws &  
 marrying anyone. I found  
 Comaras & Puroras living  
 together at the Macumba.  
 Their "Bradmen" or old men's  
 influence has been destroyed  
 by the whiteman never to  
 rise again. My Torapuna  
 friend deplored the "departure"  
 from ancient custom & said  
 that <sup>most</sup> "young men" & women of  
 today who live within easy distance  
 of the Railway line laugh at  
 the idea of tribal restrictions.

There is no doubt in my mind but that the Arunta north of Crown Point have attained a higher level than their southern brethren, these people look with disgust upon the Piraungaru custom & say contemptuously "him all same wild dog" him cant a knowen what name father longa piecainny" one man to my horror said to me "Piraungaru blackfellow all same white fellow him catch any lubra" - Notwithstanding the fact that a Crown Point black told me "by tbye plenty makeem Piraungaru" I am inclined to think that the custom is dying out as a better system

becomes popularized - This labor  
 of relationships will I am  
 afraid make Stirlings papers  
 almost valueless. I should  
 much like to be present  
 if you show it to  
 Messrs Horner & Fison. I  
 have not yet been able  
 to read Hameloid & Curmai  
 but hope to get through it  
 before next mail arrives. Since  
 my return from Iceland I  
 have not had time to read  
 my Danish papers even. All  
 my spare time during the  
 days has been spent with the  
 Huggers at night. It is too  
 hot to sit in the home &  
 read. Huggers just arrived with  
 two rats which he says are new

to me but they are suspiciously  
 like *Entuchukin* which I have  
 been rejecting. I would add a line  
 or two to this *Entuchukin* *Entuchukin*  
 1<sup>st</sup> While I think *Novillie* is  
 the *Worapanna* equivalent for  
 the *Aranta* *mira*. You can  
 imagine how much I would  
 like to have just one day  
 with you at the junction -  
 instead of sending you  
 my copy of original notes  
 I have had them copied  
 by Squire & am sending  
 them to you under registered  
 enclosure you may require  
 them for future reference  
 I am curious to know why  
 you sent for them. I am  
 also registering all anthropogel

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matter as I have a horror  
of it going astray, in all  
there are four registered  
letters you can form no  
idea of the amount of  
work attached to this lot  
of manuscripts. The mere  
copying it out from note  
book is nothing. We had a  
very pleasant race meeting  
& notwithstanding your spiteful  
prayer I managed to scoop in  
a few lovely little pounds  
but it may comfort you to  
know that I have lost over  
a hundred on my share of  
transactions. I appear to be  
interested in nearly all the  
wild cat concerns in Australia  
let me advise you to put a

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a few pounds into M<sup>r</sup> Bensons  
- I have not given any of the  
Kurdatcha or Illapuvina  
pictures away & don't intend  
to - I see by the papers that  
of "Old Savage" is going to  
England for a trip, is he  
going to try for the "F.R.S."?  
his ~~reply~~ criticism on your  
drawing of one of his skulls  
was very characteristic & it is  
a good thing that you can  
look upon it from a humorous  
point of view - Most men would  
have heard a bird at his  
hoary old head - Do you  
hear from Wall how is he getting  
on if you are communicating  
with him please convey my remembrance  
- Glad to hear that your brief trip

to the tangeres did you good - Why  
 the deuce cant you go away  
 for a month french is sending  
 me some photos today by Mr  
 Frost on his trip. The creek  
 was scoured for *Hyla* *Sallengeri*  
 after last flood but not one  
 was found. Note that you have  
 not given the Horn volume of  
 any of my Corroborax or Commonal  
 photos the Higgins here whose  
 pictures are to appear in the  
 book are quite flattered, as I  
 showed him your sketches &  
 explained matters to him - I  
 your last letter you say the most  
 important thing to find out at  
 present is that group marriage &  
 swearing are I guess we found out

all about it. There is one question in your letter that puzzles me a bit viz "What are the equivalents of the Hoas where the latter exist". It appears to me that the Poramgoum custom was introduced to modify promiscuous intercourse for unless a woman is not a man's actual wife for Poramgoum he has no right of access - probably in ancient times no man had a special right to the exclusive use of any woman. You must understand clearly that in the country all <sup>new</sup> women born Unawa and call each other Unawa. there is no special or distinguishing name for ones wife or husband.

neither is there in the Urapanna,  
 of I remember rightly the  
 Kieri people have some  
 distinguishing name for the  
 actual Father, vide Horvitt -  
 although my Matthevic man  
 says they have not - You will  
 notice that the Arunta people  
 distinguish their Mothers & Sisters in  
 blood as Meeya adulla & that  
 their fathers blood brothers are  
 similarly designated - there is  
 no such distinction made in  
 the Urapanna - My Urapanna  
 man had never heard the <sup>Arunta names</sup> reports  
 of by any other name than  
 those we know of viz Baltharra  
 &c &c You say it is difficult  
 to realize how Peramgarru comes  
 within the limits of a single tribe

It does not appear difficult  
 to meet, close to the borders  
 of the Unami where the  
 two tribes mingle & intermarry  
 & flourish vigorously, while  
 at Charlotte Waters only  
 a few cases are met  
 with & further north at Crow  
 Point fewer still. I have not  
 heard of a single case north  
 of the Crow although I have  
 now an opportunity of questioning  
 natives from that locality - I have  
 spoken to Byrns about sending  
 up one of the Charlotte men  
 & shall probably have one here  
 before next mail - You say when  
 you were at the Crow "Natives  
 from north & south were camped  
 together. Pomegranus must have been

Amongst them, what was the relationships  
of these ~~men~~ to men from the  
North, while they were all together"  
the Pirangans would have  
no relationships with the men  
from the North except that  
established by their tribal system  
no man has a right of access  
to a Pirangan woman unless  
he is her Pirangan. The whole  
thing appears to me to be very  
clear. Of course you will  
understand that every man's wife  
has a number of Pirangan  
The latter are not a class of  
women set apart for a special  
purpose - the system to a certain  
extent modifies promiscuity. I  
have no doubt that was the reason  
of its adoption. Where there is

No pursuing our a higher moral  
 level pursuits there can be no  
 question about this. The system  
 probably existed here long ago  
 although these people have no  
 tradition of it. The fact of their  
 being in the act of changing  
 or improving their class system  
 shows that they are struggling  
 upwards - towards the light  
 don't you think so? Oh! I do wish  
 I could get you to talk  
 it all over for a day or  
 two - To revert to the  
 Lordeta ~~when~~ I am told all  
 that when a young man takes  
 a Lordeta woman as wife  
 he dubs her Puroola or whatever  
 class his wife should be. This  
 is strong evidence of an absence

of class system in Looscha  
 I am enquiring into the  
 marriage system down South  
 to see how far have not been able  
 to detect any difference —  
 Colour of head dress in same  
 dance white on red & blue ground  
 same applies to one of the  
 pictures in Horn lot —  
 Don't think for a moment that  
 I resent you repeating questions  
 repeat them as often as you  
 like until you feel satisfied  
 that you have got at the  
 bed rock. I shall look  
 forward eagerly to your  
 next letter & quite expect  
 an avalanche of questions  
 See me know if box of  
 things sent by Carnet reaches

you safely in I am now inclined  
 to think that when I get at the  
 Altunga Fair Negroes I shall find  
 that only the Allaartunja or his  
brother in blood acts the part of  
 Chaantchawa I shall know definitely  
 by next mail All my enquiries  
 only go to confirm my previously  
 expressed opinion that the Water  
 Oeknannadilla does not differ from  
 other Oeknannadilla - how I must  
 conclude this awful letter  
 My kindest remembrances to  
 your Spices & the Nannies &  
 with our united regards to  
 yourself

Yours most sincerely  
 J. Fisher

If at any time you require  
 duplicates of the things I  
 send you just let me  
 know  
 J.F.