

Alice Springs

13<sup>th</sup> March 1896

My dear Spencer

I was very sorry indeed  
to see how my wife to hear  
of Mrs Spencer's serious illness &  
the loss of your little son.  
I hope before this reaches you  
that she will be quite well  
well & bright & strong again.  
We can both realize how  
much you felt the loss  
of your boy & my wife is  
full of sympathy for Mrs  
Spencer & yourself. I was  
naturally pleased to hear  
that the tide of relationships  
had tied you up in a way  
that I suffered so much

myself in the construction of  
that table that it really  
comforts me to think that  
you too have suffered, with  
this small budget I am  
sending very full notes on  
the subject from which I  
think you will be able to  
satisfactorily complete the table.  
You will see that in the notes  
I have repeated myself again  
and again for which please  
accept my excuses. After  
last mail left I wired you thro  
Byrne that I was sending  
Munira to summon the  
Atadanya of the Rain or  
rather Nabor Okuannakello  
from Arlonga. I had for  
a long time been trying to

get these men to come in  
 to see me but owing to  
 the fact that political relations  
 were strained between these  
 groups & those of Aitunga  
 district they would not come  
 I was particularly anxious to  
 settle this *Uthannakula*  
 business it has been hanging  
 for so long suddenly it  
 struck me that I might try  
 Mwirra, told the old  
 King how what I wished to  
 do, he advised sending two  
 Coomara men with Churinga  
 & suggested two men to each  
 of whom I supplied a pair  
 Churinga were wrapped in some  
 feathers in approved fashion.  
 They at once started were

instructed to say to the  
Maartunja of the rain group  
"I want you come quickly  
to see me & tell me about  
your Behnannadilla. These  
people will not grow. I  
send my Churinga" ten days  
after leaving. One of my  
Inwira returned with a  
message that the Maartunja  
of the Behnannadilla Coratwa  
with his two brothers would  
follow in a few days. In  
due course they arrived & were  
received by me with open  
arms; after clothing them  
they visited my den where  
where they admired & I then  
showed my collection. He  
went thoroughly into the

Rainmaking business which they would  
 not discuss in presence of Buelhanna  
 & Pannaga of this place - The  
 old Alaartunja of the Arltunja  
 Water group died about  
 twelve months ago & was  
 succeeded by his second son  
 the fat man of the photo,  
 the elder son having been  
 born within the circle of  
 the possession Odnamashen  
 is only in a secondary degree  
 of the Water Totem & therefore  
~~is~~ not eligible to become head  
 of that Totem consequently his  
 younger brother who was born  
 within the Totem circle became  
 Alaartunja - As a general rule he  
 performs the ceremony of rain  
 making himself but he sometimes

allows his younger nephew to perform the ceremony - during the life time of their father all three (i.e. two younger sons & father) performed the ceremony - I persuaded them to ~~them~~ let me go through the ceremony so that I might photograph them, in separate enclosure you will find copies of the pictures & in box per parcels post the negatives. I am sorry to say that none of the negatives are very good but I think you will be able to improve them. The weather was infernal for photographic work - The rain ceremony of these people is very similar to that at Charlotte

Noteworth except that these factors do  
 not build a special market -  
 the decoration of the head &  
 body is slightly different - I  
 am sending you by parcels  
 post the head dress ~~now~~ & also  
 one of the Churinga carried  
 by my Inuira, you may  
 like to have this Churinga as  
 a curiosity, I would not part  
 with the other for anything -  
 I am thoroughly convinced that  
 the Water Oknannabilla is not  
 in any way a special affair  
 it especially concerns the Coomera  
 & Purula groups just as  
 the Udnirringeta does the <sup>Blackman</sup>  
 & Purula - When my summer  
 tent went away into the hills to  
 decorate the ~~Churinga~~ they ~~do~~

with them only Comarica & all  
Puriteo men but when they  
had finished the decorations  
& were ready to begin proceedings  
they sent & invited all  
the men in the Camps to  
attend. The Maorunga told  
me afterwards that he could not  
allow the Puetharra & Panungo to  
see him being prepared unless  
they were <sup>his</sup> members of the  
Totem Circle. There is always  
this appearance of mystery  
about Otknamakella Ceremonies  
the opposite classes are not  
supposed to know anything  
about them. The Puetharra &  
Panungo will talk of their sacred  
Ceremonies before the Comarica  
& Puriteo & vice versa -



# Note

The person making rain  
must belong to the family of  
the head of the Totem who  
only deposes his power to  
his sons or brothers in blood

In the Udnovingala the  
Alaartunga sometimes deposes  
his powers to his younger  
brother in blood

WJ

My informant was careful  
 to point out that his performance  
 here was only an imitation of  
 the *iatutekuma*, he could not  
 make rain here, the ceremony  
 to be effective must be performed  
 at a spot within the *Odnannastilla*  
 circle - In my previous notes  
 I stated that stones of *Churinga*  
 generally are only lent to  
*Odnannastilla* of the same designation  
 this is incorrect - *Churinga* may  
 be & are lent, I have proved this  
 up to the hill, to the people  
 of any friendly *Odnannastilla*  
 circle, irrespective of class, but  
 the ceremonies attached to an  
*Odnannastilla* can only be performed  
 by the heads of *Odnannastilla*  
 within the totem circle - Rain

must be made within the same circle  
 Adnawungala within the Adnawungala  
 Inca within the Inca range.  
 I have so often to correct previous  
 statements that I am afraid you  
 will think I am careless. I really  
 am most careful but it is a  
 most difficult matter to get at  
 the bed rock of truth with these  
 people - Some years ago the Adnawungala  
 lent some of their Churinga <sup>Adnawungala</sup>  
 to the one of the same groups  
 in the Stangerays Range they  
 were returned with similar  
 ceremony to that described  
 by me in these mails <sup>no loan</sup>  
 in connection with the Inca  
 Adnawungala - When borrowed  
 Churinga are being returned it  
 is an understood thing that

They are accompanied by a  
 large number of *immetinga* & *otera*  
 & by weapons such as boomerangs  
 & shields if the leading group  
 are not members of the latter  
 article - You will see from my  
 notes that the *intekuma* of  
 the Ence men, the *Bulhara* &  
~~C. Paninga~~ *Panunga* are not included now  
 in the *Uluvingata* only those  
*Soomana* & *Parula* who were born within  
 the *totem* circle are allowed to  
 receive *intekuma* - from enquiries  
 I have made in all directions  
 I find that each *Uluvingata*  
 is governed by local rules &  
 traditions - I think you will be  
 delighted with the *Ulca* *totem*  
 pictures the *ingalusa* of which  
 I am sending you in care of

Should want them for the  
"Kuanradika" paper - The  
regulations as to food & rules  
regard to the dead you will  
find very interesting. The  
photos of the women displaying  
Chimurilya Chapter of bones  
& wearing the Chapter are all  
something quite new - if you  
require the negatives let me  
know - So that you might know  
exactly what the Chimurilya  
is like I persuaded Field to  
take a grave if I have not done so  
myself (lest they should discover  
the theft & punish me by withholding  
information) & I am sending by  
parcels post the broken up  
Chimurilya to the wooden  
vessel with which they were

Covered. You will find the  
 bones a little mouldy, but  
 I don't think you will mind  
 that - they will form a very  
 valuable addition to your  
 collection. This mail takes you  
 ten containing two *Coniurus pedunc:*  
 1. *Nalus cat* (Chilpa not Chilperla  
 latter is name of the Corroboree  
 of the Chilpa) 1 mag: giga two *Phas:*  
*Mac: sordid* field mice & one bear which  
 appears to me to be *Phas calura*  
 (Nalus name Chalpinga  
 though the tail brush of the one I  
 took down appeared ~~more~~ larger)  
 You will also find in the tenth  
 a smaller bear with bushy tail  
 skin. I do not remember sending  
 to you before - In small box by  
 ordinary post you will find a  
 number of *Aphas* *Am:* - The tadpole  
 + The eggs say the bear is mature

the most young were made to  
identify was brought to me  
by little Bri with a request  
that it be sent to the fessor  
he insisted upon me putting  
it in the bin if I should  
have thrown it away - he  
has contributed and there  
the mob - The black violence  
the idea of *typhlops* pol:  
eating ants say "him casta eatans  
ant" that one Professor monkey  
"jabber" by the way it might  
also be worth noting that  
the legend or whatever it is is  
supposed to be distributed through  
the bodies of the Raitchama  
(Doctors) of some Western  
groups the presence of the  
*Maackina* in their bodies

you

is said to give them great  
directional powers - A very old  
& celebrated Rautchana from  
the northern side of the Western  
McDonnells - about 80 or 90 miles  
distance - was here on a visit  
to me in quest of Tomakourto  
&c. he has given me two  
Aknowarow Stones which the  
old villain with wonderful  
dexterity appeared to extract  
from his body, through which  
of course you know these  
Stones are supposed to be  
distributed - they are ordinary  
pieces of quartz crystal - After  
the old fellow gave me the  
Stones some of the old men  
here including the King asked  
me to return them to the old



104

Raittéhara would die, they were  
evidently very earnest about  
the matter so I took the stones  
back to the old man who in  
their presence said he wished  
me to keep them, he had  
plenty more in his body;  
since then he informed some  
of the young men that at  
any moment he could cause  
the stones to return to him,  
it was not possible for him  
to keep them if he wished  
them to return. In dealing  
with the Kurdatscha & Illapawmja  
material I think it should be  
pointed out that the Raittéhara  
always determine the cause of  
death which they invariably attribute  
to Kurdatscha, Illapawmja,

The magic of an enemy (speaking  
 of love) Parantavirya (I shall  
 probably have something to say  
 about this imaginary individual  
 next mail. He is the spirit who  
 dwells in ears, trades doctors  
 to the this order, they are  
 numerous, proud around prominently  
 & though generally, <sup>is</sup> aggressive  
 & good tempered, occasionally take  
 it into their heads to tell  
 men or women) Undoubtedly Kurdistana  
 Mapurmya etc were invented  
 by the Rautchama - Recently  
 at the Chinwilya ceremony  
 over an old man's grave. an  
 old man's son ~~said~~ shouted after  
 the ceremony "When leaving the grave  
 "We have not found the Kurdistana  
 who killed you when we do

+ When I inquired why he attributed his relative's death to Kerdacten he said the Railléharra had told him it was so caused

We shall see him" + Thanks for Part II Zoology: the illustrations are splendid, the printing & paper is good, but the binding is awful, surely Horn could have stood the extra expense necessary to provide decent covers. I learn from these <sup>misc</sup> papers that Horn has been lecturing at the Colonial Institute on the work of the Expedition, here is an extract "The story of the Expedition was not merely illustrated by a number of most interesting lantern slides taken from photos by Mr J. F. Green but punctuated into grateful flashes of humor" You can imagine my disgust when I read this paragraph, in having slides made from my negatives. He

has deliberately broken faith with  
me as in your letter to him  
written while I was in Melbourne  
you very clearly stipulated  
that the plates were only to  
be used for illustrating the  
book, I always had an idea  
that he would make use of  
the plates & the only thing about  
his paragraph that surprised  
me at all, was the mention  
of my name, I wonder he didn't  
claim to have taken the pictures  
himself. I feel very glad now  
that you withheld so many  
of the plates - as old French  
would say Verbum Sap -  
Nimede writing his mail says  
he has arranged for the  
publication of his journal

map through the Royal Socy: he  
assented by the Govt - he is  
going to publish some illustration  
of natural features I have asked  
to be allowed ~~to reproduce~~ <sup>to reproduce some</sup> of some  
of my pictures. This journal  
should be well worth reading  
especially that part of it  
which relates to the rupture  
of friendly relations with them  
who I am afraid will not  
find it very palatable reading -  
The only thing Vennecke appears  
to regret is that he cannot  
gratify your wishes - I shall  
watch for further developments  
with much interest - Your  
friend Poll is in an interesting  
condition, very much so in fact,  
during our ~~stay~~ absence down

Country she told Solomon had  
 a long spell away from the  
 Station, either the influence of  
 a fresh ball or fresh air has  
 done for the old girl what  
 Solomon has never been able to  
 do - She is now one of my  
 daily pensioners & a much  
 exercised in her mind lest  
 the Government should  
 again exercise its malignant  
 influence on the colour of  
 her unborn child - She intends  
 to tell it of it turns out  
 white brown but of course I  
 wont allow her to do this  
 - I can imagine you smiling over  
 my sketch of the Fine  
 Ceremonies I simply could draw  
 a stroke & was obliged to

(See notes)

The photos I prepared this  
sketch because I know you are  
a glutton for details & what  
may appear trivial to me  
may in your opinion be of  
the almost importance - unfortunately  
there was not sufficient <sup>mat day</sup>  
light to get a photo of  
the Inu-irra party actually  
delivering the Churinga, but  
from this sketch, if necessary,  
I am sure you could produce  
a true picture - you have only  
to paint on the backs of the  
men within the square the  
designs from the Churinga  
alpin-tura - You will note that  
the Eilean men lent their  
Churinga to the Eilean and  
Udnovingeta at the near Udnoolya

6a

I have not sent any of the  
 Ceremonial lectures to Norling  
 & shall not do so until they  
 are published - It was an <sup>Udairinjedi</sup> ~~Udairinjedi~~  
 old man who led the ~~Udairinjedi~~  
 party & carried the Churinga  
 vide notes - I have got Centre  
 on the job at Pempre shroo  
 enquiring as to Class he has  
 now withdrawn his statement  
 as to the existence of there of  
 a Class system similar to  
 the Tennants Creek notes as  
 follows "they have a kind of fixing  
 this gnananeta many gnananetas  
 & their brothers & sisters are all  
 the same caste but their children  
 are Jannatavika called Jannatas  
 for short & vice versa as the  
~~Jannatas~~ Jannatas offspring



are "Chicanazetas" since then  
he has discussed the matter  
with one of his traders who  
says the terms used only  
mean right side & wrong  
side. it appears to me to be  
a very remarkable thing that  
there should be so much  
difficulty in ~~learning~~ discovering  
the class if they exist. I  
wish I could get out there  
for one hour. I'm sure I  
could clear the matter up  
as it I shall not rest until  
I've got at the bottom of it.  
A half caste boy about 15  
years of age who has been  
on the Tempe Power Station  
for some years does not know  
of the existence of Class names.

(D)

(18)

There - Like you I have for years  
reduced the idea of the Swatch  
being without classes but by jove  
I am beginning to think it quite  
possible I have now entered the  
services of the head of the  
Mission Station the Rev. Mr. Rogers  
who has promised to make inquiries  
the Temple blacks occasionally visit  
the Mission Station. I note what  
you say about "putting my  
information where it is likely to  
follow thro to Adair" & I intend  
to practice patience on the native  
subject in future. I am so full  
of the whole subject that I would  
get almost any thing to have a  
week with you, perhaps it would  
be advisable to mention in the report  
Ochumakilla which the existence

①

of the eight classes & their system  
amongst the Kytiche as also the  
recent adoption of the system  
amongst these people. I agree with  
you that it would be unfeeling  
reluctant to find in the past or any  
part of our informants published  
in someone else's name. I think  
if such a thing happened I would  
know up the Springs. There is  
trouble ahead for you over that  
map but your last mile I think  
overcome all difficulties. Let  
me advised of the progress of  
events. I am much interested.  
I was delighted to hear that  
you were so well pleased with  
my last mail notes. I hope the  
budget will prove equally interesting.  
The Ockmannakulla material will

at any rate, by much cringed  
I hope you will "feel quite  
happy" now about the Hair  
Ceremony my statement as to  
the Chaatchana (which is <sup>spirit</sup> only  
another name for Alartunga)  
being appointed by family  
influence turns out to have no  
foundation in fact. The Alartunga  
only or one of his brothers <sup>Alartunga</sup>  
deputed by him, may perform  
the ceremony - You know something  
of the difficulty attached to  
procuring reliable information from  
the blacks so I need not  
trouble you with explanations  
as to how mistakes arise - I was  
disgusted when I heard from Othradalla  
about the loss of spirits <sup>and</sup>  
from what they tell me it was

Very badly packed - I had a note  
posted to you at Stuttgart because  
I am nearly out of spirits  
& the printer, when collecting  
will be gone, is approaching.  
If you could send me a  
collecting tin with screw top  
I could take it with me to  
Seymour's Creek when I go  
North in May or June - By  
return mail send some more  
tins also a few bottles. I am  
on the tracks of a spotted  
beast about the size of &  
shaped like the Chalpungä,  
a tree climber & great jumper,  
do you know such an animal, is  
it a smaller species of cat?  
The niggers got one 30 miles North  
of here but it went bad & they

Show it away - Our mail contractor  
 bitterly vents the establishment  
 of parcels post here! Now  
 I hope this will find your  
 wife quite well & strong  
 again & that you too have  
 quite got over the worry  
 & anxiety which you must  
 have experienced. My  
 kindest regards to Mrs  
 Spencer & love to the Noddies  
 Hope joins me in kind  
 regards & all good wishes  
 Eliathe Yours Sincerely

A. J. Smith

Don't forget the two of you  
 want more beads