

Alice Springs  
August 1896

My dear Spencer  
I returned from the  
North a few days ago although  
the trip was somewhat unenjoyable  
from every point of view I  
was deemed glad to get home  
again Your rat box is nearly  
full & goes to you by this mail  
as it is too heavy to send by  
parcels post. I am sending it  
per coach to Oodnadatta thence  
to Melbourne by rail, all the  
specimens collected on the upward  
journey are carefully wrapped up  
& labelled with localities those collected  
at the Barrow on the way back  
are bundled in loosely in the box

contains two *Phox C'canda* got by  
Bealey at the Peninsula - the frog  
labelled "tree frog" is also according  
to the Niggers a baroness & in  
dry weather it is said to store  
a large quantity of water taken  
found in this condition is as large  
as a mans fist - This information  
confirmed by others. Chiropter very  
plentiful at Barrow Coast but as they  
are bulky specimens & I was  
doubtful whether you wanted any  
I only preserved one. Several of  
the lizards are new to me particularly  
those sent in tubes - the small *S. talis*  
I expect to know are *S. inthopai*  
& *flaviviridis* or some such name I  
intended comparing them with  
descriptions in your book but  
have been awfully busy since they



return & therefore unable to do so  
 you will find one of the Phos  
 Calura, procured at Ryans well  
 sized, one other specimen was  
 destroyed by the tuggers who foolishly  
 tried to burn instead of digging  
 them out. The large rodents procured  
 at Paman's Creek are new to me  
 but they are fairly numerous at  
 the Paman. On the whole I don't  
 think I have done badly & if you  
 don't find something new or at  
 least very rare in the collection  
 send me off your list of calculators  
 I was very successful in collecting  
 weapons &c at the Paman where  
 I was very fortunate in seeing  
 a large number of natives of various  
 tribes who had collected to see the  
 Alutta (pot belled) as they overran

their Sub-protector - You shall have  
a share of the lot. I succeeded  
in getting a few good types  
& dropped across a Jutra  
Corroboree which is entirely new  
to me. The pictures go to you  
this mail - unfortunately the  
men were not disposed to  
Corroboree as two of this  
number had died from influenza  
a few days previous to my  
arrival - a death at the Barron  
also prevented me getting  
any ceremonial pictures there -  
I think you will be pleased  
with the tables of relationships  
Twitcha Kytians & Barron-ung  
also the class systems of Kolpre  
Kage Ilcorra & Bingongira which  
are all Tribes having languages



of their own, if last mails  
 information about the marriage  
 Ceremony staggered you I don't  
 know what on earth you will  
 think of the information ~~that~~ on  
 that subject which you will find  
 noted on the ~~pages~~ <sup>pages</sup> of relationships  
 before I ventured to put that  
 note on paper for you I was  
 very careful to make enquiries in  
 all directions I could not believe  
 it myself at first but after  
 numerous enquiries from old men &  
 women I was forced to accept it  
 as the truth. I am convinced that  
 in the Arunta it is the *Ipanama*  
 of the girl who performs the  
 operation it is he who has first  
 right of access & after him her  
*Ukudella* & *Ukama* in the order

named with the Kytaw &  
Nawraninga the Ipanama Uadusta  
Ochelya & Meleeya & Urama has  
access in order named - the two  
Urama is always the last man - surely  
surely this points back to something  
very like promiscuity - There can  
be no doubt about the thing being  
so, for now questioned separately  
after I had become conversant with  
the relationship terms, all adhered to  
the same story - The Lutchana friend  
at the Barrow states that his  
people have no class names that  
they only use the relationship terms  
to distinguish each other but that  
the Lutchana who live close to the  
border of the Atimta are adopting  
the class names of that tribe -  
The missionary boards interpret the



Term Zwitcha as meaning "Stupid"  
 & they say that the Alchivira  
 Knowabata is the old man or  
 men of the dream time from  
 whom they the Alchivira received  
 their class system did not  
 give a class system to the  
 Zwitcha on account of their <sup>disobedience</sup>  
 At the Baron & the Peasant a  
 certain amount of ceremony is  
 connected with the marriage <sup>ceremony</sup>  
 The younger men are not allowed  
 to take part in it that is men up to  
 about 25 years or more in your  
 reference to the ceremony you say  
 "now arellta is the name given to  
 the young blood fellow at <sup>subordination</sup>  
 this is not so - until he is subordinated  
 he is Arwa-cowda after the operations  
Selwa-kurda - Arellta or arelltha is

The name of the ceremony  
applies equally to both sexes  
Kuma means to cut - then  
speaking of the operations  
on a man they refer to  
it as Pura (penis) ari<sup>l</sup>tha Kuma (cut),  
then referring to the operations  
upon a woman it is A<sup>l</sup>ha  
(female organ) ri<sup>l</sup>tha Kuma (to cut)  
I think it is evidently looked  
upon as an initiatory ceremony  
but of course not anything  
like so important as that  
connected with the men otherwise  
it would not be dropped so  
quickly after the advent of  
the whiteman I was surprised &  
of course delighted to learn that  
in the Enquiwa ceremony that  
dropped across something like



of great importance I have for  
 years known something of the  
 Kalyana rite of the lower Akas  
 & Urapanna & I think I have  
 made casual reference to it  
 in some of my letters, when  
 reading Kamelori Kuman I indeed  
 that it was briefly referred to by  
 Horrell under that name as the  
 "blood letting after circumcision"  
 amongst, I think, the Picie Tribes  
 I knew that it was something more  
 than blood letting & at once started  
 making enquiries amongst these people  
 as to whether they had any similar ceremony  
 The young men knew nothing about  
 it except from hearsay & it was a  
 long time before I could ferret out  
 the information which I have thought  
 it wise to send on to you this  
 mail. I regret that I did not send

it to you ~~months~~ months ago  
but I got it into my <sup>thick</sup> head  
that as I could not connect it  
especially with any Totem or food  
producing ceremony that it was not  
of much importance. The Wiyam  
Ceremony although evidently one of  
the same nature does not appear to  
be carried out on the same scale  
I have never heard of more than  
one or two men being under Wiyam  
at a time. When I lived at the  
Charlotte, Macumba was the usual  
place for this ceremony - the last  
Ingrima took place at M<sup>r</sup> Burnell  
about three years ago when blacks  
attended from Evinga Charlotte Kaloo  
& Bloods Creek. It appears to me  
that each Totem has its own Ingrima  
but the ordeal by fire is ~~the~~ a



Characteristic features in all though  
 the minor ceremonies may be  
 somewhat different - I was delighted  
 to hear Irons opinion of the  
 work it is most encouraging, I was  
 surprised when I understood from  
 a previous letter that all this  
 labor only went to corroborate what  
 had previously been written by others;  
 it may <sup>seem</sup> strange to a man of your  
 recently trained mind but I  
 have always been afraid to ~~take~~  
 more than glance through ~~the~~  
 & Kevani but I should be prejudiced  
 in any way. I wanted to work in  
 my own way, trapped in the  
 mantle of my own ignorance &  
 devoid of outside impressions  
 feeling that if I went wrong you  
 would be able to come to the

rescue I found out where I had  
strayed from the right track -  
Macey thanks for the proofs  
of Shelings paper I consider  
he has treated me with absolute  
fairness - I had not had time  
to more than glance through it  
but I could not help being  
struck with the amount of work  
he has expended in saying  
nothing, he has written in a  
diffuse but pleasantly chatty  
strain which will go down with  
the general public & help to sell  
the book but so far as I  
could see there is not a particle  
of information in it of any  
value - The Chewinga, why the devil's  
father does he spell it Chewinga?  
- article is the best thing I read



the four words "Symbolic of  
the totems" as you say enabled  
him to arrive at nearly the  
truth if I had not made  
use of this expression to him  
when speaking of the totems  
before going to Melbourne he  
could not have written a line  
about them I am almost certain  
that while staying with him  
at Mr. Lofly's I added  
those words to my notes, while  
going over them with him one  
night, if I did not actually  
add the words I suggested  
doing so, I remember well his  
pressing me for more particulars  
& when I firmly (contrary to  
your father's expectations) declined he  
said the words had better be left

left out - "they did not convey  
any information" In trying to  
him, before I left here for  
Adelaide, I told him that the  
Houses were symbiotic of the Totems  
I showed you a copy of the  
note in Melbourne when you  
were so anxious to know precisely  
what information I had given  
him on the subject & you then  
expressed the opinion that I  
had said too much - however it  
do not matter too much - The  
whole thing including my original  
notes appears poor stuff compared  
with what we have done since - Its  
very funny his saying that he  
doubts if there is any thing more  
of interest to learn about these  
people pretty cool too in face of



The fact that I have more than  
 once told him that my notes  
 only touched the outer fringes of  
 the whole question - What oh what  
 will he say when the Magazine  
 opens appears? I am delighted  
 that folks did not succeed in  
 hooking out the eight classes for  
 him, for on earth he is mixed  
 doing as I can for the life  
 of the underworld, when he  
 come in here on various occasions  
 he was fairly puzzled & stood up  
 in a hush & appealed to me,  
 though not directly, for help, which  
 he did not get - I looked  
 dazed & said "you'd better drop  
 the thing there without in it  
 & he made Sterling giving <sup>this as</sup> the  
 latter my opinion, if he had

Kept on he ~~will~~ have unearthed  
the 8 classes amongst the Aztecs  
a development which appears to  
me ~~most~~ most interesting. I am referred  
to them that the book is in print  
& that if he does make the discovery  
it will be too late — he has got at  
the subject of the Antiquities alone but  
I think he is in error in stating  
that Indians are not allowed to see it  
I know that the rituals of the  
Toltec to which the Stone belongs is  
some distance off — therefore I think  
it most probable that the women  
are allowed to see the Stone but  
of course not the Ceremony of  
intichiuma — This of course is  
mere speculation I shall enquire  
into the matter later on, there are  
several minor errors which would



have been corrected if he had  
sent me the MS as originally  
arranged — My brother noted  
me a few days ago stating  
that the Commissioner of Police  
had arranged for a Trooper  
to assist you so that all  
difficulty & doubt with respect to  
Coble is removed the latter seemed  
to think that perhaps the Commissioner  
of Police would not be disposed  
to instruct him to assist you  
unless by Ministerial direction  
so I wrote asking my brother  
to do what was necessary, at the  
same time I told him that Coble  
was the one man ~~you~~ ~~should~~ ~~use~~ whose  
assistance you required I am sure  
if you called on the Commissioner of  
Public Works & pointed out that

The nature of subjects of your  
trip they would be only too  
glad to give you a pass over  
our Railways - it is not a matter  
of personal obligation at all so  
that you need have no hesitation  
in asking - it would not  
surprise me to learn that  
they had offered you a pass  
I know they will if it  
occurs to them - I received  
quite a long letter from Charles  
this mail in which he gives  
the good "stops" over the Hospital  
row but I was behind the scenes  
a good deal on both sides of  
that party quarrel & although  
my sympathies ~~are~~ naturally lean  
towards the medical profession I  
think they have been greatly to blame



throughout they have allowed themselves to be the willing captives of scheming wire pullers outside & there has been pigheaded obstinacy & lack of conciliatory attitude on both sides — The Govt are sending up a Stamping battery & cyanide plant to our goldfields & things in the mining world here are looking up brightly I am interested in two syndicates from each of which I hope to make a little pile I hear my friend Turner has made almost countless thousands since I left Melbourne he is the largest shareholder in the Premier Mine & the shares of which are now about 50/- They were 6/- when I was in Melbourne

& prospects were so bad that  
he advised me not to buy -  
Isn't it strange about such  
some fellows here. I brought  
Berley down with me he is  
developing Byrnes taste for geology  
& if this field goes ahead  
will doubtless blossom forth as  
a mining expert. Field leaves  
in a few days to re-leave  
Byrnes who is to try to float  
one of our properties in  
Adelaide his future movements  
will depend upon the luck he  
has. The property is called the  
Wheat Fortune & will I think  
turn out valuable but of  
course we cannot find coins  
to develop it properly here  
- You must miss the wife &



(6)

(24)

Children horridly you will  
find the house terribly lonely  
or will you check it up  
& take quarters elsewhere - My  
hope & I are looking forward  
to your arrival & we shall  
only be delighted if you  
will stay in the whole time  
here - the race meeting seems  
a bogey to you, it will  
not interfere with you or  
be worth in any way as  
I shall have no visitors except  
Martin of Temple Row this  
year - I am fond of racing  
as a parlour but - the mode  
of ours has got such a  
hold upon me that I should  
consider it no hardship if I  
stayed away from this year

meeting - I have heard from  
other sources that you seem  
to have a great objection to  
being here at Race time. I really  
don't know why unless you are  
under the impression that it is  
a season of mid Carnival when  
it would be impossible to get  
a few moments quiet - It is not  
nothing of the kind there is  
very little difference in the States  
here & here so made your mind  
easy on that score - There after  
trust palaces with the old men  
here arranged for an Engineers  
Ceremony to take place sometime  
in November I am to assist  
them with relations they have  
already begun preparations &  
some of the young men are



24

scouring the Country in search  
of feathers &c it is many years  
since the last Ingwira was performed  
here & only two or three of the  
younger generations have seen  
through it. Of course the Ceremony  
will not be carried out on  
a great scale, to enable them  
to do this two things are necessary  
a good season & an abundance  
of food & feathers of which we can  
depend upon. I have in my  
possession the <sup>inter</sup>stick used at the  
McBrouell Ceremony. Cook & I  
the store house brought them in  
to me some time ago. I understand  
all I said about the message  
stick I am prepared to admit  
that sticks such as you describe  
exist in other tribes. I am under

the impressions that the deeds  
conveyed a definite message which  
did not need to be interpreted -  
My enquiries amongst Kheleto &  
Narvamanga people failed to  
elicit evidence of the existence of  
message deeds other than vula  
as amongst these people - I think  
our work proves up to the hilt  
that Anthropologists of the McFellows  
& Westermarck schools are entirely in  
error when they suppose that the  
relationship terms of these tribes are  
merely terms of address, no intelligent  
man could live amongst these people  
& fail to recognize that very  
definite & complex terms of relationship  
exist. Stirling does not appear to have  
used much of the information collected  
before he met me, so far as I have



need nearly everything of any  
 value was extracted from me here &  
 by letters since his return to town  
 many pieces of information he  
 has failed to acknowledge but I don't  
 mind this in the least he has  
 spoken on such terms of generous  
 praise that I would be childish to  
 grumble - Do whatever you like with  
 the notes in the way of additions &  
 correction or ~~adding~~ to when the book  
 comes out - I shall scorch Hueling about  
 there being in his opinions "no  
 great novelties to be discovered" the  
 Chiriquis are more than symbols  
 of the Potemi they are symbols of the  
 dead ancestors of these people I  
 don't think there is much about them  
 that we shan't know when you leave  
 here - Cortes raids on the Cotacabunga

has delivered the whole tribe in  
the northern parts - It would be  
utterly absurd for Horn to reject  
that cutting picture on the ground  
that the subject is too old, men  
are often three four or five or twenty  
sometimes more before they undergo  
the operation nowadays - At Kamants  
Creek I found one of the Station  
Flacks about 30 yrs of age commenced  
but not submitted living men a  
tribe who was Uman but - of another  
tribe, they would not give him his  
proper tribe - Of course he was under  
the protection of the Station Masters  
but sooner or later he will be  
operated upon - at present he dare  
not leave the Station without firearms -  
- However if Horn does not pursue  
it we can do so later on when we



Can give a fuller account of the  
 initiatory rites - as a matter of  
 fact most of the subjects indicated  
 nowadays are bearded young men  
 so long as they remain boys they  
 are content to remain about the  
 Station under the protection of the  
 Whites but when they become men  
 they naturally want to take part  
 in exercises to which they  
 are not permitted to do unless  
 Extra dulla - Not much fear  
 of Menaced being troth out  
 you he has too high an opinion  
 of you - to return to the Engwona  
 & I have not been able to discuss  
 in the limited time at my disposal  
 any evidence of a promotion or  
 at the conclusion of the ceremony  
 but there certainly is exchange of

25  
women temporarily thus the  
missionary & other groups admit  
freely — In your letter you  
ask "who exactly are the young  
men who go through the ordeal?"  
all young men were supposed to  
do so before the white men  
made large assemblages impossible  
I think you will find that the  
information already in my possession  
refers to most of your question,  
as to whether the Mothers occupy  
any special positions at the  
ceremony I am unable to state but  
from what they tell me I am  
inclined to think there is no  
distinction made, certainly all take  
part in the preliminary ceremony  
of throwing fire over the houses  
— Note Pasquevas at Barrow & Peeniktook



- There is no separation of the  
 classes at the Engwura ground.  
 all mingle & camp together just  
 as they do at the Unqunja  
 (meeting place of men) the  
 custom extends into the Kylicia  
 & Naraminga Tribes & was only  
 recently performed by the  
 latter - all groups all Totems  
 participate in the Ceremonies - the  
 young men - that is the Novices -  
 are in charge of the older  
 Exsava throughout the proceedings  
 I have not lost sight of the  
 importance of finding the  
 primary classes but so far as  
 luck - I have just heard from  
 Breaden of Owen Springs that  
 the Niggers there are preparing  
 for some very important ceremony

(8)

from what he tells me I  
fancy it is Ingonia if so  
I shall be there to see I  
have sent the Heggan word to  
let me know - unfortunately  
these groups & the other people  
are not on friendly terms just  
now - Of course you noticed  
in Sturtin's paper that one  
of his correspondents Kempson  
the Peade stated that the  
operations upon women was done  
with the intention of preventing  
breeding & that some women were  
deliberately left unmarried so that  
they might have children - What  
silly nonsense this is I have heard  
the same story before & though I  
did not believe in it I took the  
trouble to make enquiries & found



(24)

that there was not a particle of  
brush in it this is on all  
four with a story which the  
Station Master of Police Cooper at  
Barrow Creek tried to stick into  
me, they stated that <sup>in</sup> certain men  
of the Khyliche have the urethra  
of the penis was not split -  
they claimed to have examined  
certain men whom they named  
I sent for the men examined  
them in their presence & found  
that they were split right up -  
another instance, I remarked that  
men who were not circumcised were  
never allowed to take their  
proper labour. Oh yes said  
Mr. McKay they are here at any rate,  
one of my boys is not split  
who has his proper labour. I called

in some blacks found that  
the young fellow had in his proper  
labra there taking Mr. McKay  
down to the camp. I examined  
the young man & found that  
he was suborned by young men  
often deny that they are suborned  
as the white men make fear of  
them - these instances will give you  
~~any~~ an idea of how unreliable  
information is when coming from  
men who do not take special  
pains to get at the truth - It  
will be a difficult matter for  
me to get much more information  
about the Horapanna so far I  
have not been able to get hold  
of the man I want - Please state  
fully what you mean by "Are the  
Holoms in any way local" I am not



not like that I understand the  
 question - Women when pregnant  
 with female children sometimes  
 see a finely decorated young girl  
 approaching the camp with her  
 husband - I am enquiring as  
 to why a Melon cannot go  
 to an elder brother of her  
 deceased husband the descent to  
 younger brother is the law of  
 the Khyber & Warramunga I do  
 wish you could have been with  
 me to see the wonderful state  
 of perfection to which the  
 gesture language has attained in  
 the latter tribe, it had a wonderful  
 fascination for the knowing  
 tribes of the Warramunga are  
 very shrewd. Women do not  
 speak at all for twelve months

(P)

Sometimes longer after the  
death of a husband or other  
relation including daughters.  
They keep not open their  
mouths until released from the  
bond of silence by the men.  
When I was at the Pamanant  
I saw about 12 or 15 women  
some of whom were known by  
the whites not to speak for  
six months & one for a  
period of two months, they  
will not even speak to the  
whites. The men cry these  
have done them in mourning  
& cut themselves about horribly.  
The wounds inflicted by the  
Aranda are nothing compared  
with the awful cuts of the  
Pamanant. The women cry



They have close & cut through  
 the scalp for the full length  
 of the head & then concentrate  
 the wound into a point  
 I saw one woman doing  
 this & the sight was horrible  
 they talk away in camp as  
 fluently with their fingers  
 as they can with their  
 tongues even those who are  
 not under the ban of silence  
 use the gesture language  
 for choice & most wonderful  
 of all the little children of  
 6 or 7 years of age incidentally  
 understand this motion - Women  
 do not even speak to their  
 husband when under the ban  
 - If you look closely at the  
 group of Navaroneinga women

You will notice the  
contorted heads - these *Harumangas*  
are a fine sturdy race of  
men & women the latter  
especially large framed &  
muscular, the men or many  
of them have noses shaped  
thus ( The old men shorten  
the upper lip & both sexes  
knock up out the two  
upper incisors. I should  
much like to have twelve  
months anthrop: work amongst  
them but that is entirely  
out of the question their  
Customs however do not  
differ much from the *Aruntas*  
- It is by means of the  
gesture language that they  
enquire as to the *de mans* class



I jotted down the gestures used to express the various classes & also the questions as to a name class. I found that the gestures used to express my name were common to the Kytche & Navarainings & in both tribes they have gestures expressing the Totems, by post mail I hope to send you a Chumbalcaris made by Uvrapuna man at the Strangorays. The sound made by the vinta of the Counts at initiation Ceremonies is supposed to be from the uninitiated to be the voice of a mythical spirit called Iwan yvinda - the bundle of vinta

(1)

Given to the *Aracivata* is called *Manjirida* - In going over this mails notes you will note that my previous statement as to *Homens* *quaamfa* being hidden away & never again loaded as it is not correct - they are restored to the *Estuatalunga* after a long period - I have a magnificent collection of *Churingo* on hand when you come here you can help yourself to as much money as you like - I have been thinking of giving that *Merimisa* you took down to the Adelaide Museum as I have another what do you think? My information about the *Aracivata* blood being eaten by the fashers & mothers came from *Perley* I had long been aware



1 (24)

that the blood was eaten & I  
asked him to make very careful  
enquiry as to who partook of  
the feast. I have also felt  
doubtful about the father &  
mother joining. Now that I  
have the label of relationships  
before me at my fingers end I  
can get a Nigger to the  
key at Tennants Creek &  
find out precisely at any time  
At the Barron I found that  
the father of a boy carried  
about the forest for months  
until the boy was quite  
recovered it was then shown  
to him & placed away in a  
hollow tree. Since returning  
here I have an idea that  
it is placed in the Ghaung

tree - how I must close I  
have had a hard time of it  
since my return every spare  
moment has been occupied in  
scribbling - We hope Mr Spence  
& the children will have a  
pleasant trip & that they will  
be much benefited in  
health Our united regards  
& good wishes remain  
Yours ever faithfully  
J. H.

Geology Brown has returned to  
Adelant's I hear that he &  
Byrne sailed yesterday fore  
aft at the Charlotte - Poor old  
Savage I feel so sorry that his  
trip has been spoiled by the death of  
his 2nd