

of Alice Springs
13th May 1898

My dear Spencer

I was delighted to get
your letter of Apr 25th I
hardly hoped to hear from
you until next mail. I do
not wonder at your being
fogged about the mails and
letters and to almost sure
to cross each other on the
road. The first note you
received from me under the
new service was written &
despatched previous to the receipt
of final instalment of 1/4 possession.
If you can find time to

Drop me a line once a fortnight
I should be glad but I certainly
don't expect you to do so
how fully your time is occupied
I can't help think with the
services under the old system one
never had time to get through
the papers properly & I doubt your
reflections upon the department I
doubt he knows to be a number
The times were from a excellent
Victoria when postal & telegraph system
is notoriously the most magnificent
Antiquary, so much so that one of
your own papers recently suggested
that Sir John Forster should be asked
to go over to reorganise the departments
Your Victorian are all alive & you
think your message little postals fetch the
best of the Union - I was sorry to

learn from your letter that you
are not feeling quite well &
heartily wish that I could bring
you to home for a month or two
The weather is simply perfect &
the country is a beautiful one
of Eden, only fossils has scattered
the flies so that left, in every way,
is pleasant - I hope to the mountains
with French will visit you again
again but do not know ~~if~~ done
for a few months. I am sure
you will be able to visit me & if
you prefer in the course of your
visit permanently in one year
& I do not think the value of your work
I only wish I had your brain
by my side I do take care of myself
It appears to me that your
career is very just beginning, & you

best work ever in the future -
Thanks for copy of Preface it
is perfect. I am especially glad
that you made a reference to
the importance of at once making
some special effort to gain information
about the organization of other
Austrian tribes. This may be the means
of inducing the Colonial Govts or
rather the Federal Govt to do something
by way of organizing an
Aborigines Department part of whose business
should be to collect record all
that can be learned of the Aust
tribes with you from or Howell
at the head of such a dep^t
Some splendid work could be done
I am sure will be delighted
with the reference to the work which
he has so kindly done for us

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Some of the crabs at Allunga
are turning out well several parcels
of impeded stone have succeeded
over an by to the low through
the battery, & in one or two cases
I will pay to treat the
lungs with Cyanide. I am going
out on Monday to remove
the Post office from Harding's close
to the Govt works & intend to
have a good look around. Baskin
is working a claim called the
Dog & Duck! from which he
expects great things, he will probably
spend the whole of his time
on the field. I have had a visit
from about 20 Ispira men most
of them proper Wavigals they
brought some loot the most interesting
articles being two magic stone headed

Spears called Lamanga a coach from
which is supposed to come directly
These implements are traced from a
great distance north another depiction
is to avoid shortly taken with last
which I hope will include stone axes
when are they used in stone tools
part of the Leprosy country - I took
some photos but they are not very
good I have not had time to
get them ready for the mail -

Both theory about the totems is
applies to me and to. to actually got
abundant in the first place it
seems to imply a former stage
of higher development in their
(the Nigger) social organization - a
consequent entanglement of authority
very different to any thing existing
at the present time - We show for

an absolute certainty that the totem
of which we have personal knowledge,
has never had a higher system than
in Dogon and the evidence we
have collected are clearly pointing
to a gradual upward development
which is their proceeding as instance
the enlargement of the class system
names. Personally the origin of
the totem does not appear to
me at all a difficult question
to understand I say this with
a consciousness of what you will
smile (perhaps squint) for which you
will probably laugh me with all
for similar words as I appear to
my uneducated mind as to the origin of
natural totems that the totem
should believe that he has seen from
an animal (as an example) you will

admit that they get nearer the
truth than the millions who believe
in descent from Adam (sic) and
that he should look upon the new
animal with a certain degree
of reverence, he had to account
in some way for his origin, he
observed the changes which take place
in certain forms of animal life.
The Wicketly & beetle for instance &
his evolution from the grub stage
to that of man did, & does not,
appear to him any more remarkable
than the change from the grub to
the moth or beetle. Of course I
don't expect you to agree with
me showing as I do that you
think there is something deeper &
vastly more important at the root
of the whole question but I have

Thought over the subject a great deal I have talked it over scores of times with the Meggers & I feel sure that the Totems merely originated in a desire to account for origin - for no other purpose. In ~~the case of a man at~~ a Cochatoe totem at Pennants Creek I found that a Cochatoe man claimed descent from a small spicately marked tree calupellare which was supposed to have changed into a Cochatoe from which the man alcheringa ancestor arose - the Cochatoe & not the calupellare was the mans. totem I think I sent you the calupellare which was about 3/4 inch long bright green in colour & marked with a number of figures like the figure 8. formed them 8.

I would give a months crew to have a month or even a fortnight amongst

Roth's Tigg was just to go into the
lotar questions, it is not one of
upside down they never feel fully
unless they feel that you respect
- and has some belief in - things occur, the
average Engineer - I don't mean by
this that Roth is an average Engineer
by any means - only clatters indicates
the Megger who says that he is
descended from an animal, the
"leather" paper of the Pette
Pette here is a doubt as concerned
the sort of thing I can give
understand Roth's lack of information
in the scapies

Like you I am sure you always
the fate of the illustrations I am
know as a hope that McAllister
with a lot of money a part in
the lot of money in a business

Tyler & Gray so recommended - You
most splendid choice - a try as
means very fast - when they see
the prints they cannot help but
impressed with their importance -

By last mail I received a letter
from a Mr Barclay an English Vicar
who is related to our sponsor he
he writes that he is greatly
interested in the Australian natives
he came to Oodoodulla for the
purpose of seeing some of the
Aboriginals there but instructions to
get up a Corroboree for his
special benefit only had a dozen
employed boys could be got together
The result you can imagine is
less than our hope of which he
has heard something, it is to be presented
today's "if you can spare me a few

photos I should be extremely grateful
I should much appreciate your
kindness", he would have liked
to come on here but his time
was rather limited & the flies
scared him. I am sending him
a few prints this mail but
nothing of much importance. It
is evident that he takes an
interest in our photos do you
know anything of him?

Stirling has broken his long
silence & his letter clearly
shows that he is still deeply
feeling the loss of his boy; he
makes no reference to our
work.

What a very poor opinion
you have of Politicians if one
accepted your dictum ~~there could~~

our public men instead of commanding respect would meet nothing more than contempt - Jennings' terms are noble & worthy of the man but Gladstone needed no such exhortations his political life I take it was pure & honest throughout. I cannot for the life of me see or understand why any honest man should lose his finer feelings or become debased in politics, on the contrary I think that political life tends to develop & bring out all that is best & most unselfish in a good man's character. If I go into politics I will, believe me, be with an earnest desire to run straight. I would not blindly follow any man, not even Kingsley with all many of whose views & acts I entirely disagree - the referendum I would resist

of all sorts for I believe with
that great man John Corley
that its establishment would clog
& hamper the Parliamentary machine
it made it inefficient - especially of
the referendum recently he said
"The great glory of representative
Government has been that you shall
not have constantly a down appeal
to the electors upon special cases,
but that you shall choose men
who shall express your views &
you will upon all questions as
they arise" Mr. Stowe's opinion I think
has some weight with you for he
is not merely a politician, he is one
of a great class of letters who from
the study is moulding the thought of
the present generation - I wish you
whether I go into Parliament or not.

I have read him though he is one
of that objectionable class and
Anti-Socialist - therefore to
me politically hostile & strictly
extrajurisdictional - seriously old feelings
my political dislikes. That other
if which you had a share is fading
it is not likely the school ever
again have the opportunity I am
not also sure that I should take it
if offered I had. This Keegan work
has grown on me it is present
I take more interest in it than
in anything else - even material or
the opportunity of gathering material
for a second volume I would
cheerfully relinquish all claims
of Political Life which might
after all turn out dead sea fruit
You somewhat challenge my self confidence

I expect Byrne has deferred writing so long that he does not know how to begin now - Your translation of Drumwings is not correct Ulya means Shade iromtā means cold ulyasineya would be of or belonging to the shade. I have talked to the Nuggons about it again the Drumwings like in sunshine yes but what is sunshine to them is cold & darkness to the those man who is unable to see with the eyes of the Drumwings - The form of measles from which Mrs Spencer & the Reddies were suffering when you wrote is prevalent in our settled districts German measles I think they call it I hope they are be right & about again long before this reaches you - My boys are splendid but for some time past my wife has not

been feeling ~~the~~ strong, last summer, though
 not very hot, was an exceptionally trying
 one & she felt it very much. I am
 hoping that with the cool weather
 she will feel up again. She does not
 care to face the down country winter
 with the children or I would have
 taken them down before now.

Dr. Eglmann is at Shaly Waters on his
 way back. I had a wire from him
 the other day the first I have heard
 of him since he arrived at Dr. Dawson's
 newly here months ago, where on earth
 he has put in his time. I heard the
 remotest idea - he will probably go straight
 down from here if I learn that he
 is going to Melbourne. I will give
 him an introductory note to you.
 I am sure you will like him & you
 owe him some reparation for the wretched

surprised with which you ~~and~~ my wife -
requested him. I suppose I can ask fairly
to him now eh? If I do so without
first getting authority from you I am
sure to get a lecture from the little
Woman who so sweetly threatens to write to
you if I mildly express a wish to
buy a share or two - The fun of it is
that in financial matters I think you
are the hero & I the expert! - I shall
not go North unless after I take my
family down country I shall then be
able to devote more time to the shops
so there will be no necessity for me
to hurry home - The Waegis School had
been able to get at all unless perhaps one
or two visitors turn up amongst the
Warramungas. In my annual Aborigines
report to the Minister I mentioned that
during the present year it was my
intention to visit all depots throughout

my district this will open the way
for a trip to Tempe if before
the end of the year I cannot place
in your hands particulars of this
managerial system which will do much against
dullard. I don't think it will turn out
to be very elaborate. All Payments (and I
shall try to arrange to make certain
Commisions) don't you wish that you
could come with me - Tell Frances there
was a bonfire held in the Country
they cleared out and God & the Brunches
only knows where after the rain
for the old Chap my kind regards
& all good wishes I see our big men
are wrestling with the Collins both
some of my friends down country
are frantic about it -
May 13th - What do you think of the Commonwealth
bill I am kindly for federation but I
am not sure that the present bill proceeds

upon sound financial lines, there seems to be
a great diversity of opinion amongst
financial authorities. I believe the New
Zealand view should be worth
taking differs widely from our Conservatism
in his estimates of costs. If his
figures represent the truth, I am not
sure that federalism just now is a
good thing for the Colonies -

Now I must close up. I shall have
a bundle of photos for you
next mail. My kind regards to
Walter and close to the babies.

Yours ever sincerely
John