

July 10. 1900.

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Melbourne

My dear Howard

Many thanks
for your letter. Being so far

away from England I had
almost given up the idea of the
F.R.S. but am very glad to have

it. As you say 40 is a
terrible age but personally I
don't feel any different in the
matter of age than I did 20
years ago and hope to be able to
get through a good deal of work
yet.

You will be very close
upon the same age when this reaches
you.

Only a short time ago
Tubbs (you may perhaps remember
him at Down) who was staying
with me here were talking over the
Macfadyen + wondering what had

happened to them. I quite envy them their experiences in S. Africa & hope they will come out safely.

Eric I only remember as a very minute infant & the thought of his fighting makes me feel aged.

I had quite lost sight of Arnold White and am not at all surprised to find him occupying the position which he does. It is only seldom

that I hear anything of old school fellows. Adams seems to be

doing good work. Canada in many ways is preferable to Australia - for one thing it is nearer Europe & without a revision expenditure of money & time we can run over every now and again & take our friends & take in touch with modern developments. However Australia

offers a big field for work especially in

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the line which I like best - Zoology & anthropology. Allen & myself have plans - as yet rather hazy but perhaps before long they will be more definite - of an expedition amongst the untamed tribes living between the centre of Australia & Port Darwin in the north. This however again means time & money & before starting I must get our National Museum into order. All my spare time during the past year has been devoted to the removing & rearrangement of the collection which is a big one - quite as big as if not bigger than the one in Manchester & comprises Zoology, Botany & Stereology.

There is nothing like trying to arrange a big collection for revealing to you your colossal ignorance: when you set down to write a descriptive label then you begin to realize how defective your knowledge is. I don't know how you find matters but what certainly strikes me most forcibly is

that I can get up a given subject well enough but that it all goes out of my head with marvellous rapidity so soon as even I tackle another one.

It used not to be thus but, while I can still remember quite well things learned at Oboen or Oxford, what I now learn unless ~~it~~ my memory is constantly refreshed seem to evaporate and all that remains is a knowledge of where the information was derived from & a capacity of quickly re-acquiring it.

As you say if only the world were properly managed you & Ellie ought to have time & money to go round it & come & see us out here. Melbourne

itself is anything but lovely though in years to come it will make a really magnificent town: however it is a paradise compared with Manchester though we have not & never can have suburbs which will compare with Bowdon.

At the same time we have endless parks with undulating ground fringing the shores of a big

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blue bay & we have also endless sunshine with just enough cold, brisk, weather to keep us healthy.

Last week we had ice on the pools in the road & get our camellias, violets, roses & primroses are in full flower & at the same time the oranges are ripening.

July 16.

Your recent letter has just come telling of the birth of your little girl. Many congratulations.

I hope you will call her Kathleen which is one of the prettiest of girls' names. I should like to

see your home at Hale but fear it cannot be for some years yet.

My next 'leave of absence' must be spent up in the interior. Gillen &

I have vague ideas of an expedition into the country lying between Alice Springs right in the centre & Port Darwin or the Gulf of Carpentaria. It

May or it may not come off but
I am hoping to earn after a
burst of fine air the chance of
being one more amongst the 'unfortunates'
savages who are a good deal more
interesting than their civilized brethren.

Australia has at all events the
great advantage that there is no need
of pioneer work to be done & work
which, in anthropology at least, cannot
be done so long as it is to be done at
all.

There is a great chance
in pioneer work which quite compensates
for the loss of many advantages which
one of course obtains in a new country.
Perhaps one cannot help at times
feeling how much one misses in
being so far away from the centre of
civilization.
The case is regard to our children
and yet on the whole Melbourne &
Sydney are quite equal to an
ordinary provincial town at home.

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My feeling on coming back from
England last time was that if I
could not live in London I would
prefer to be in either of the former
two towns east of which is the centre
of a big province.

Aug 20. If this letter does not go soon it
will follow the path of sundry others
which have remained unprinted &
ended a miserable existence in the
w. p. b.

My mother tells
me in her letter today that she has
been to your new house & evidently
likes it very much. I am glad to
think that you are out of the old
Roundly house & am sure that Ellie
will be much better at Hale. We
are in the rather awkward position
of having either to turn out of our
present home or try it and do not
quite know what to do. Lillie has
a kind of rooted objection to buying a
house - I don't quite know why except
that with a kind of feminine sentiment
she feels that when you rent a house

the landlord pays for repairs unless you own it you do the same yourself.

Property & everything is 'going up' in Melbourne & promises to continue doing so especially with the prospect of the city being for some years to come the federal capital. The next few years ought to be interesting ones out here from a political point of view. We shall undoubtedly have a protective policy and there are big questions to be worked out in regard to the opening up of the more tropical parts. This must either be done by coloured labour or not at all but the Australian working man dislikes both black & yellow men and if he be not willing to do anything himself takes good care that no one else shall do it.

Someday you ought to come out here & see things for yourself.

Give my kindest regards to Ellie who I hope is quite right & strong again.

Yours ever

Waldemar Spencer.

P.S. Have you read Reeve's History of New Zealand called 'Da Ree Roa' or 'The Long white cloud' if not it is the best account of an Australian colony yet published & gives you also an idea of the trend of modern politics out here.

W.S.