Langley Lodge, Headington Hill, Oxford
Aug. 30.

My dear Spencer,

I have been owing you a letter for ages & beg forgiveness for the long delay. The fact is, I was in India when your last letter came & even since I got back I have been in a state of rush—trying to cope with work which accumulated while I was away & at the same time to deal with current work which has been exceptionally heavy. Correspondence has gone to pot in consequence. I was awfully glad to get your letter & news. It is sad to think of your having retired from Melbourne University, especially as you are still full of go & have so much knowledge to disseminate around. Still you have earned your rest. I am very glad that you are doing a general account of Australian aborigines. It will be very welcome.
to all of us ethnologists, but it is a
big piece of work. It certainly wants
doing. The local differentiations are
very important, and I hope you will
deal with the distribution of particular
types of artifacts, as that will be
of great value to museum curators and
others. You mention having sent some
Nahps per C. T. Reid, a Rhodes Scholar,
but I do not think that he has turned
up at the museum. I will make
inquiries to try to get into touch
with him, and also ask for the
specimens for which, in any case,
heartiest thanks. There have
been coming in to the museum
aspace of a week another building
being finished. I brought back a collection
from the Naga Hills, Assam. I spent
three months among the Nagas,
visiting most of the tribes, covering about
800 miles (including a run down into
Manipur, to Imphal, the capital). In the
Naga Hills, there are no roads, only jungle paths; it is all walking
or riding, I found it very strenuous
work, averaging 10 miles a day in
great heat, especially as my heart
had gone to bits at the end of the
war, through my having overdone it
a bit during Red X work abroad. However,
I got through fairly well, with only one
bad heart attack. I got malaria all
right, but that is inevitable. I don't
see how it can be avoided. I was
unanimously interested in the Nagas.
They are excellent savages, some of them
smile intelligent. Nearly all the time
I was either with Nutter or Mills,
both very keen on the Natives, whose
affairs they administered as I.C.S. men.
They have written excellent books on the
of the tribes. The Eastern Nagas are still
incredibly headhunters and hardly touched
by civilized contact. I must say that there
who still carry on the practice are far
more interesting than those that don't.
They are more sly, alert, and course
preserve the old Naga culture—and
they didn't seem to want my head.
The motto in the Naga should be "Memento
rebus in arduis servare—capiam
Memento you lose your capiam and the
Nagas get the 'mementos.' From a
technological point of view they are
most interesting. I managed to
discover some new points, one of
which (a peculiar type of fishing trap)
helps to link their culture with
that of peoples as far East as Santa Cruz
and the Solomons. I can now trace
this trap through Burma, the Malay
Peninsula, Borneo, to New Guinea
and Melanesia. It is the same with
their fire-making method which
carries as far as New Guinea. There are plenty of other links with the East. I wish I could get back to the Naga Hills, go on with the work, but I doubt if my doctor would allow it even if I could afford another trip. I wrote to George Pitt Rivers, whom I knew in Oxford, saying how glad I would be to have his collection. He sent me photos of some of the things, and he evidently did very well as a collector. Malinowski's book is very fascinating, and he has brought out much that is new. His collection from the Trobriands is a very good one, and I hope to get a proportion of it. He is, as you say, inclined to think that no one else can do decent work, but he may grow out of that. I was lecturing in Manchester a little while ago and saw Rickson who seemed very
flourishing & unchanged.

Do let me hear from you again some time. I wish there were a chance of your coming over.

I wish so much that I had had a chance of seeing Lady Spencer when she was home.

Kind regards from my wife to you & yours & good luck to you.

Yours, 

Henry Walpole.