

Melbourne.

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Jan 6.03.

My dear Balfour

I have been very busy during the last year & do not remember whether I have written to you or not. In a few weeks

you ought to receive one or two boxes containing certain things which I collected. Since packing them up I have learned that

you have secured a collection of northern Australian things so that probably most if not all of our specimens will not be of much use to you. However there are a few

things which probably you have not got, principally a Wurruja. When the central Australian native is civilized he will doubtless make this for sale. Meanwhile the one

sent is a genuine one & it is a most difficult thing to secure because it is made for the performance of a special ceremony & is then, under ordinary conditions, taken to pieces because the human hair string which is wound round it belongs to certain

individuals who are not at all anxious to part with it & also the same Nantuya is never used for the performance of more than one ceremony.

It is rather a poor kind of thing as compared with your magnificent African part but it will be of interest to you as very typical of Australian Africanism. I bought a good deal of its drum but I bought with me a copy of this replaced that which came off & I hope it will reach you in good state. As you will see it will not be safe to keep it in the open.

I have a case 8'4" x 8" filled with ceremonial objects - Nantuya, Wanyu, head drums etc which would make you envious.

There is a revelation so far as our idea of native Australian art are concerned & I am now pondering over a chapter on this subject - the last which remains to be written of our new book which will I hope be

in Macmillan's hands in about two months.

I have packed the family off to the seaside and am very hard at work writing up our results.

It is only when you begin to do this that you realize your ignorance. However I do not think that we could have done much more than we did but of course with our present knowledge we could do much more if we could only go over the same ground again. However this is not possible. The last expedition added a good many things to my head & rather I am sure my first experience of these & another one might turn me white.

The northern Secretary of Australia is all very well if you have not to work hard but when the excitement of writing makes you perspire so that the water streams out of you, you can understand that work of any kind is very difficult. Also you cannot get native notes, as in Africa, to carry

along soda water + champagne +
other luxuries.

Hansen is a year or two fitter
→ I hope to get away to study a
desert tribe out to the S.W. of Lake
Eyre. I wish that you could
come with us. We cannot promise
you much in the way of luxury but
you would enjoy it immensely + when
you have really seen a savage
in his own natural surroundings you
can understand him in a way which
no amount of reading enables you to do.

What do you think of Haddon's
last book on Head hunters? Roth
writes me that the Cape York natives
had been 'pulling his leg'. I do not
think so. Roth is a very good man
in many ways but he does not
really know the native + has never
got below the surface. He has
never even seen an initiation ceremony
+ all of the natives with whom he
has come into contact have been
civilized. He is going on
publishing his bulletin + has a big
lot of material in hand. His work on

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Same classification is really good but he has not had much chance of getting information in regard to 'sacred matters'. However he is sending me down a 'bulletin' dealing with 'superstitions & beliefs' or rather the proof of this which is to be issued shortly.

Also I have been going through the ms. of a magnificent work by H. H. H. - the result of 20 years + more of correspondence + work of his own. What with this +

R. H. H. + our own work I am pretty full + might write something with Australian ethnology.

I cannot think why the ceremonies etc. of the tribes with which I have worked amongst seem to differ so much from those described in other parts of Australia or rather why we seem to get so much more in the way of these sacred ceremonies and can only think that it is because they have been overlooked

in the other table.

Feb. 3.03.

I came across this unpublished letter this evening. I started a letter to you a drawer until a convenient time came to finish it. My notes you will probably have received. The cases containing our specimens. They left the Museum some time ago.

Today I returned Robt. his 'prof.' This Bulletin contains some real good stuff and you will doubtless receive a copy of it in due course.

I am still hard at work on our book but hope to send the ms. home to Macmillan in about ten weeks.

The drawing of implements in Pedians work + occupation much time + my lay vac. will be over before my work is done + there will come over more the infernal period of lectures I should you may feel thankful that you know nothing. We have just had a real hot

week culminating in a day with 105° in the shade followed by one with 187° in the sun. Then after sweltering + perspiring we began to cool down.

What are you doing with yourself. I hope that you at least keep well. The Oxford climate always makes me feel very depressed and though it is rather warm here at times still the sudden sunshine + bright weather is very pleasant + helps to make up for the absence of other things.

If you see Hatcher Jackson give him my best regards + also Thomson.

We never hear anything more of the morphological department.

Weldon seems to have put an end to anything like morphologic work + the expiring effort of Oxford in this line was Darwin's work. His text

book is the best elementary work yet published + I cannot help wishing that he had the chair. It seems, alas,

ago since you + Bourne + Selater
+ little Podge + Jimmy Rotts + myself
were working in the old lab but it
was a very pleasant time + I wish
that those of us who yet remain in
the flesh could meet together for
an evening's confab. I have often
thought over this + really if one of
you men at home could communicate
with those of us who are now scattered
over the world it might be possible
for us to plan a meeting. Those
of you who live at home are in constant
touch with old friends but it would
be a very great pleasure to us who
are living in distant parts to have
the chance of one more meeting
old friends. If we had a long
enough notice the original members
of the 'science club' of 1885 or 1886
might come together. Think this over
+ if you can possibly arrange for such
a meeting I will 'by hook or crook' be
present.

Yours very sincerely
W. Baldwin Spencer,