

Fraser

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The University of Melbourne.

Nov 14 1897

My dear Sir,

Very many thanks for your great kindness in regard to the publication of the work of Mr Gillen + myself. I had no idea that you would interest yourself to this extent + can only assure you that we are very grateful to you. By next mail I will communicate as you suggest with Mr J. Macmillan + will send him an outline of the work + some of the photos. which will give him an idea of the illustrations without which we do not care to publish. I am a little afraid that the lack of European or in fact any dress may cause difficulty but hope not.

I am fully aware as you point out of the great advantage of securing such a leading publisher and also of the fact that an author is by no means the best judge of his work & if Rupert Macmillan do not think it worth their while to publish as we desire I am venturing to ask if you would be kind enough to decide for us whether we shall publish on any terms so far as illustrations etc. are concerned which they may offer. Any decision to which you come we shall cordially assent to.

At this distance from home it is very difficult to make arrangements & I trust that you will excuse the liberty which I have taken in asking them to refer the matter to your decision.

A few weeks ago I came across a pamphlet published in N.S.W. and written by a certain W. Squires in which he records a ceremony amongst Australian natives of

northern N.S.W. or Queensland in which a kind of sacred festival the necessities partake of the flesh of a man. As Mr. Squires describes the latter as being of high caste and without "bluish" I am much inclined to think that Mr. Squires has been the victim of some imaginative black fellow who saw that the amount of blasco ahead was proportionate to the amount of interesting information which he could conjure up.

I wrote to Mr. Squires asking for further information but he has gone to S. Africa & my letter is now in pursuit of him & will probably never be answered. The mischief of it is that statements like the find their way into print & are repeated so often that people take them as true.

By the time that this reaches you I hope to have our work done & in type-written copy ready to send. It has been written twice but we have such a mass of odds & ends of facts none of which I like to leave out as they may be of value sometime or to someone else in his work, that I find it very difficult to fit everything into its

proper place.

If you think that we have any facts likely to be of service to you in any of your work I hope that you will send us questions which we will, if possible, gladly answer.

There is one point which we have recently found in connection with the Intichiuma ceremonies (those held to increase the numbers of the animal or plant which gives its name to the Wotem) which will I think interest you. At a celebrated spot called

Undiarra (The Antiarra of Dr. Stirling's account in the Horn Vol) is a rocky ledge on which at Intichiuma the men of the Kangaroo Wotem bleed themselves. The natives say

that this ledge represents the body of a great Kangaroo of the 'Alcherriga' & that after it had been deposited here great numbers of other kangaroos (animals not kangaroo men) came to this spot & went into the ground their spirits remaining in the stone. The blood is poured over the stone for the purpose of driving these spirits out in all directions the result being an increase of Kangaroos. Within a few yards of this

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stone is the waterhole which is inhabited
by the spirits of Kangaroo men. Just as
the latter can go into women so the
kangaroo-animal spirits can go into
Kangaroos.

This I think gives us the clue to
the meaning of the Intichiumna
ceremonies.

I send one or two more copies of
our abstract published in the Vict. R.S.
in case the other did not reach you, +
thank you again for your kindness
believe me

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.