

FRAZER

Melbourne.

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Sept 22.03

My dear Frazer,

Very many thanks  
for your letter of Aug. 17.  
I have just written the preface  
& have included sundry things  
as you suggested. The short  
review in the Mit. d. Anth. Gesellschaft  
in Wien, I had seen some months  
ago by chance - & wrote to the  
author drawing his attention to par 2  
in the preface of the book. However  
in view of your opinion as to the  
general denseness of the human  
intellect I have added a par. to  
the preface which will I hope make  
the matter clear.

If there be anything in the  
preface to which you object save  
the concluding part which is a very  
poor & feeble recognition of your help  
please strike it out or alter as you  
think advisable as I have told Mr.

Macmillan that I do not want to see proof of this & that you will be good enough to pass it for the press. I have sent home today all of the typescript so that someone in the printer's office can insert the paper in the index.

So far I have not received any proof of illustration & am obliged to hold over a few of the letter proof sheets until they come as I had not inserted the references to certain of the figures.

The same important parts of our Woodburna work have been incorporated in the proof.

I am convinced that just as certain animals have developed along certain lines so certain savage tribes have developed along certain lines.

There is no such thing as an 'all round' primitive savage tribe. Amongst animals some have retained primitive features in regard to certain parts of their anatomy & have become specialized in regard to those parts and in part

the same way certain savage tribes have retained primitive features in regard to certain things & have become specialized & more highly developed along other lines.

I cannot help thinking that the Arunta & Naitich people have retained primitive ideas in regard to totemic matters while at the same time they have ~~not~~ developed to a relatively high degree in regard to the 'class' system.

The ideas of the Woodburna tribe in regard to counting descent in the maternal line are probably more 'primitive' than those of the Arunta but at the same time their ideas in regard to the change of the totem at each successive reincarnation are decidedly less primitive than are those of the Arunta.

Amongst the lower forms of animals there is no such thing as an 'all round' higher development. They develop along special lines retaining primitive features in regard to certain ~~particular~~ structures & organs while at the same time they become more

highly developed in others. May we not suspect that the same thing takes place amongst the lower races of mankind - that amongst them no one tribe has retained an 'all round' primitive state as regards custom or has acquired an 'all-round' higher stage.

Lary & others seem to take it for granted that because the Dieri & other tribe count descent in the female line they are therefore in a more 'primitive' state in regard to all other beliefs & customs. This seems to me to be a fundamental error & liable to lead us far astray from the truth.

I have been going over our notes with the object of writing up a list of the various totems - stating whether they were edible or not. As I told you before the list is a very incomplete one because it is most difficult to find out what totemic groups exist in any tribe unless you can come into personal contact with all the members of the tribe. No man likes to speak much about any totem save his own. Each man has a very special interest in his own totem & regards it as belonging to himself & his

totemic 'brothers' + resents anyone who is outside the totemic group interfering with matters concerning it.

The result is that it is a most difficult matter to make any native give you any information about totems other than his own + this even extends to the mention of other totems.

We soon learned that it was of no use whatever to try + get any information concerning the totems of individuals other than those with whom we came into personal contact + therefore we made no attempt to get in any tribe a complete list of totems - simply because any list we could draw up would be misleading.

A man like the incorrigible R. H. Matthews who publishes more bad information than anyone else will go and give lists of this kind which he has received from any Tom Dick + Harry up country. Not long ago

he published an extensive paper dealing with a lot of the Central Aust. tribes so far as their organization was concerned.

Knowing nothing at first hand he simply sat down and arranged the classes into

minutes so as to make them fit in with  
natural descent. This individual  
appropriate work from anyone but he  
write so much & in such varied publications  
that I am afraid he will way take him  
seriously.

Sept 28

The letter did not go last mail and  
by good luck I held over the title page  
& preface also. Your card with the  
suggested title came yesterday. Very many  
thanks for it. In the whole I think it  
the best - the only danger is a liability  
of confusion between "Native tribe" &  
"Northern Niles". However I do not  
really like the "Native tribe of Northern  
Australia" as it is too comprehensive  
& also misleading & am thankfully adopting  
your last suggestion.

In two weeks at most the last  
proof ought to have gone home: my only  
fear is that they have not thought it worth  
while to send proofs of the illustrations  
in which case there will be delay. If they  
do not come soon I must see if I can  
strike the references out as not one name

anybody could invent them.

I hope you are making headway  
with your work & that the new edition  
will come in the press. Also I trust  
that you are able to make steady progress  
with your other projected works & that  
you may have health & strength to carry  
out your plans.

Kindest regards to Mr. Draper, I am  
afraid that she cannot be doing anything but  
blinking for you so much extra  
work & I am afraid that the work  
will cost many hours of your time. I  
tried to make the corrections as clear as  
possible but they were very numerous.

With most sincere thanks to you  
once more  
Yours very sincerely

Walden Spencer.