

FRAZER

(6)

TRINITY COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

13 January 1898

My dear Sir

I am much obliged by your letter of November 14th. It is a great satisfaction to me to have helped towards securing a publisher for the joint work of yourself and Mr. Gillen. I feel sure that it will prove to be one of the most valuable contributions ever made to our knowledge of savage life, and I think I have succeeded in impressing this upon the Messrs. Macmillan. They are ready, I gather, to give you a perfectly free hand in regard to the text, and I am glad to

hear that you are putting everything
into it. We cannot say of science as
of law that it de minimis non
curat. The details that in themselves

seem most trivial and unimportant
may turn out on a comparison with
other facts to be of the utmost
and far-reaching importance. In

regard to illustrations Mr. Macmillan
says, naturally, that he cannot
decide till he has seen them, but

I trust there will be no difficulty
about publishing most if not all
of them. I will send him those
which you sent me as specimens.

You may be sure that I shall
do all I can to induce him

to publish all of them or,
failing that, as many as
possible. Even if he should refuse

to publish all, I still think that

it would be well worth your
while to publish with him. The illustra-
tions that were left out might
perhaps in that case be published in
an anthropological journal, say the
Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie,
with a short explanatory text in
English. If you approve of this

I would endeavour to carry it
out, though I hope there will
be no need for it. It would be
much better to publish everything
in a single volume. I much

appreciate your kind confidence in
leaving the negotiations with Messrs.
Macmillan to a certain extent (especially

as regards illustrations) in
my hands, and I will try to do

the best for the work I can,
as if it were my own. If you

like I shall be happy to read

proofs of it. The delay caused by sending proofs to you in Australia would be serious. As the book is, I understand, to be type-written, and the type-written copy will doubtless be carefully revised by you or Mr. Gillen, it would hardly be necessary for you to see it in proof. For the same reason it would be perfectly easy for me to read the proofs; I should only have to see that the printer reproduced your MS exactly. I should of course abstain from modifying or adding to your work in any form. My business would simply be to correct any mistakes made by the printer which had escaped the Reader ~~and~~ and possibly here and there to correct a slip of the type-writer which had escaped your vigilance. I should not regard the time so spent as wasted even from

the most selfish point of view, as
I have no doubt it will well repay
me to master **TRINITY COLLEGE,**
your monograph thoroughly. **CAMBRIDGE.**

I am much interested in the
description you send me of the ceremony
of blood-pouring for the purpose of
multiplying kangaroos. I should like
to know whether for the purpose of
multiplying totem-animals or game
the natives resort to any pantomime
of sexual intercourse. I am beginning
to be struck with the evidence that in
agricultural communities a sympathetic
connexion is supposed to exist between
the intercourse of the sexes and
the productivity of the ground, the
former being supposed to have a
direct effect in forwarding the
latter. This suggests that in tribes
that live by hunting similar
means may be taken to ensure a

good supply of game. If I remember right (I have not the book beside me) one gathers from Lysons's work on the Dieri that a good deal of this sort of thing is practised among that tribe. Have you met with any ceremonies of this sort?

Another subject in which I am interested at present is the treatment of homicides, whether the killing has been done in war or in private quarrel. Is there in any case a purification of the slayer? Is there any notion that he is pursued by the ghost of the slain and has to dodge or appease him? Is there any sort of sanctuary where homicides can seek refuge and be safe? And if there are, what is the idea at the root of such sanctuaries? Why is the homicide

safe there and why may not the avenger of blood pursue him there?

Is the homicide safe only so long as he stays in the sanctuary? or if he once enters it can he come out again clear of guilt and snap his fingers at the avenger of blood? This used to be the case with some Californian tribes, but I don't see the meaning of the custom. Sanctuaries for homicides are found in many other parts of the world (West Africa, ~~the~~ Kaprikan in the Haidor Koosh ^{is} for example) and I should like to discover their origin.

Does eating together constitute a bond of friendship among your savages? and if so, how long does the bond last? as long as the food is supposed to be in the stomach? or how long? In this connection the use occasionally of fasting or purges may be of

interest. It might, e.g., be thought necessary to clear the stomach of food in one way or another before proceeding to hostilities with a person or tribe with whom one had been on friendly terms and with whom one had partaken of food. On the other hand to renew the bond it might be necessary to renew the ceremony of eating together.

Are the Australians careful about the remains of their food, believing that they could be injured by magic ceremonies performed on these remains?

This dread is obviously only another side of the belief in the sympathetic connexion between persons who have eaten together, the idea in the latter case being that no one would injure a man with whom he had eaten (at least while the food was in his stomach), since any injury done to him would be equivalent to an injury done to himself.

Thank you for the additional copies of the abstract published in the Victoria R. S.
Yours very truly
J. G. Fraser.