

FRAZER

(69)

Rowmore House
Garelochhead.

Dumbartonshire

14 ~~at~~ March 1908

My dear Spencer

I was much grieved to hear a few days ago of the death of our friend Dr Howitt. It is a great loss to Australian anthropology. I had hoped that he might yet live to do good work and to correct many of the current misapprehensions and misrepresentations of Australian facts. His forthcoming paper in the Anthropological Journal will, I believe, be an important contribution in that direction. I have been asked to write an obituary notice of him for Folk-lore. I have said that I could not write it for the next number, but might write it for the next but one. Could you give me any facts as to his early life and work? I know nothing but what appears in his published books and papers. I will write to Miss Howitt also for particulars. I hope that you will write a notice of him for one

of the scientific periodicals.

The petition which we got up on behalf of Mrs Fison and her daughters for a pension on the Civil List has not been granted. I wrote to Horwitt telling him of our failure and suggesting that a petition to the same effect should be addressed to the Victorian Government. At the same time I sent him copies of our petition and of the Prime Minister's reply (through his private secretary) thinking that these might be useful in applying to the Victorian Government. My letter and its enclosures would reach him too late. If you approve of the plan of appealing to the Victorian Government for help, will you undertake to bring the appeal before them? In that case I would suggest that you should obtain from Mr Horwitt the copies of the petition which I sent to her and also the letter of the Prime

Minister's private secretary, to be used by you as you may think fit in promoting the object of the petition. I would send you more copies of the petition, but here in Scotland I have none beside me.

I have written to you already about my great desire that you and Gillen should make an anthropological expedition to Western Australia, and my hope that at Liverpool I may be able to raise funds for the expedition. I was speaking to Sir John Murray of the Challenger, a few days ago, and he took up the scheme warmly and offered to contribute £2000 to it. I imagine (Please correct me if I am wrong) that £2000 would suffice for the work, so that if I could get nine other men to promise equal contributions, the funds for the expedition would be provided. I am hopeful of succeeding at Liverpool, where

Sir Robert. Boyce (of the Tropical
School of Medicine), the Lord
Mayor (Dr Caton), and Lord
Mountmorres are all interested
in my anthropological work
and plans. If the funds are
raised in Liverpool, and the
plan is carried out, I think
it would be right that your
book on the subject should
appear as a publication of the
University of Liverpool, Depart-
ment of anthropology, and that
the ethnological objects collected,
together with copies of the photographs,
phenographic records &c., should
go to Liverpool University.

Would you agree to this?
If I remember right, you
have many unpublished photographs.

How would it do to publish
all your photographs complete
in an album with explanatory
notes?

I am anxious to
establish at Liverpool an
institute for the prosecution of
anthropological work in the

field, and should like to inaugurate it by an expedition by you and Gillen to Western Australia, for there is nothing that I have more at heart than that. My general scheme for the obtaining of records of savage races will be propounded in my inaugural lecture at Liverpool on May 14th, and it would be a very happy omen of its success if I could announce on that occasion that an expedition to W. Australia had already been arranged for and the funds subscribed. So I am very anxious to know whether, if the money is found, you and Gillen will go. If you have not already answered when this reaches you, will you please telegraph your answer, in order that I may be informed in good time?

"Yes" or "No" would be a sufficient answer. If you and Gillen cannot go, I am afraid the scheme will break down altogether. For I could not accept money for an expedition unless I could answer for the competence of the men who are to go on it, and I know of no men but you and Gillen who are competent for this piece of work.

In regard to Howitt, I should be glad to learn when he went to Australia, what the nature of his professional work was, how he came to study anthropology, what his early relations with Fison were, &c. I think of asking Macmillan to publish a collection of Howitt and Fison's scattered

papers, for it seems to me that these papers are not altogether superseded by Howitt's book. If such a volume of papers were published, I should like to prefix to it a brief biographical notice of the two men.

I shall be much obliged if you will answer this letter as soon and as fully as you conveniently can.

To my regret of Etatism I am adding my papers in the fortnightly and a new "Geographical Survey of Etatism" which threatens to run into two volumes.

I trust that you keep well. With the united kind regards of my wife

and myself
I am

Yours very sincerely

J. G. Frazer