

24 Abercromby Square
Liverpool

19 April 1908

FRAZER.

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My dear Spencer

I received your letter of March 10th last night. The death of our friends Fison and Howitt so soon after each other has been a great grief to me. But I am very glad to have known and esteemed them both personally as men, as well as anthropologists. Their visits to Cambridge were memorable events to me. I was so proud of you four men and happy to think of you as a band of brothers. I knew of no other such band, and now two are gone. You and I, I hope, will try to stick more closely together for the loss, in spite of the distance between us. I have, as you know, the warmest admiration for your work and the fullest confidence in its accuracy and fidelity. I value it all the more by comparison

with the work of others, and it makes me sick to think of the sophistry and misrepresentations of which your facts and Howitt's have been the object. But I believe that these misrepresentations will pass away like clouds and be forgotten, while your facts and the sound and true inferences which you and Howitt and Fison drew from them will remain. I wish, my dear Spencer, I could see you again and shake hands with you. When is that to be?

I have proposed to Macmillan that they should publish a collected edition of the scattered anthropological papers of Howitt and Fison. It seems to me that these papers contain some things of value which Howitt has not embodied in his book. One striking example of this I communicated to him shortly before his death and published in "Man". It is the explanation of the classes and subclasses as

intended to prevent the marriage of ~~parents~~ ^{brothers} with sisters, & second of parents with children. Since Howitt's visit to Cambridge I had imagined that the perception of this truth was a discovery of mine, and so he represented it in his book. But in fact he had enunciated the same truth in an early paper published some years ago. I am glad that I discovered the facts and did him justice ^{before his death} and privately ^{for} wrote to him at once and the letter reached him in life).

Macmillan has agreed to publish such a volume of collected papers on condition that I am responsible for the selecting and editing of the papers, and that I prefix a biographical notice of both men. The profits, if any, would be divided between the publishers (who would take all risks) and the families of the authors. It might be a little difficult to

apportion the shares between the two families, since the greater part of the work would be Howitt's.

What do you think of this plan? Do you think that Howitt would have approved of republishing papers, some parts of which he regarded as superseded by his book? And if you approve, please let me know what papers you think should be included. My idea would be to reprint all the papers mentioned by Howitt in the preface to his book (pp. VIII-IX) together with his paper on the 'Dieri' (Journ. Anthropol. Inst. XX), his paper "On the organisation of Australian tribes" in Transactions of the Royal Society of Victoria, 1889; and perhaps his "Remarks on the class systems collected by Mr Palmer," Journ. Anthropol. Inst. XIII. Also I would include Fison's articles on Fijian customs in the Journ. Anthropol. Institute. But I do not think it would be desirable to

include the recent controversial papers which Howitt published against Lang.

I am sorry that you and Gillen cannot yet go to West Australia, but I am glad you both have ^{the expedition} ~~it~~ in view; it is one of the pieces of work I have set my heart on seeing done before I die. I told you in my last letter that Sir John Murray of the Challenger has subscribed £200 to the expedition.

My new book on totemism is to include, first, a reprint of the old book, second a reprint of my four papers in the Fortnightly, and third a geographical survey of Totemism, which will form the bulk of the book. I intend to describe all the principal facts of totemism so far ~~as~~ as they are known at present in geographical or ~~or~~ ethnographical order. I begin with Central and North Central Australia, drawing my ~~materials~~ materials of course exclusively from you and Gillen; then I take up

South East Australia, using chiefly
Horwitt's facts. That is as ^{far as} ^{what I have already printed}
have got ~~just~~ now, and ~~it~~ ^{we} will
make ~~up~~ about 450 pages. So you
see I am making the "Geographical
Survey" pretty full. From what you
tell me about Strehlow it seems to

me that I cannot safely use his
evidence; so I intend to make
no use of it. I wish you would
publish your reasons for distrusting
his evidence, such as you have
stated them to me, so that I
could refer to them. The shakiness
of Strehlow's facts ought to be
known here in Europe. As for
the fellow R. H. Matthews, of
course I shall not even mention
him or any of his multitudinous
writings. He wrote to me twice
in a tone which showed the
character of ~~the~~ ^{the} man. I did
not answer ~~my~~ ^{my} letters
and shall hold
no communication with him.
I am sorry that ~~our~~
efforts to procure a civil list

pension for Mrs Fison and her
daughters were unsuccessful. I
hope that something may be got
out of the Victorian government.
But I have already written to
you about that.

It is too soon yet to say
whether I shall like Liverpool
or not. But we have a very
comfortable house and I have an
excellent study with ~~to~~ my books
well arranged in it. I intend to
lecture very little, indeed only
to read a little of what I
have ready for publication. I
have announced four lectures
on totemism in Central Australia,
which will be an abstract
and digest of your facts such
as I have made it for my
books.

The deaths of Horwitt and
Fison are a heavy loss to you.
When you have done your work
in West Australia, perhaps
you will return and settle

in England? I wish for our
sakes we had you here, but
so long as there is field work
to be done in Australia, I
suppose that it is better you
should stay where you are. Is there
much left to be gathered in
Queensland? Do you ever think
of going there? Why has
Roth left it?

With kindest regards from us
both I am always, my dear
Spencer, yours very sincerely
J. G. Frazer

I hope you will write to me
oftener than you have done of
late years. I also have been
very remiss as a correspondent.