

FRAZER

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Hotel Terminus - St Lazare, Paris, Christmas Eve, 1928

My dear Spencer,

Your friendly card with its Christmas greetings and good wishes is very welcome to us both, and we cordially reciprocate your good wishes for the New Year. May you have health and strength and leisure to carry on your splendid work for yet many years to come for the greater good of science, especially the science of primitive man. I thank you heartily for the two fine volumes of "Wanderings in Wild Australia," which I am reading at leisure moments with enjoyment and profit. What between your graphic descriptions and the numerous photographs and drawings (most of them, I see, from your hand or camera) one seems to follow you in your wanderings and to see everything with your eyes. You do well to fill in the natural background against which your natives led their strange life and played their queer pranks. It is not a beautiful nature, but as you say it is fascinating, at least you make it so for your readers. I intend to read the two big volumes solidly through, after which I am sure that I shall be better able to understand the life and thought of the aborigines. It is a wonderful picture of prehistoric, yet living, man that you and Gillen have opened up to us. Without you two the thing would never have been done. I remember that in one of your early letters you spoke of the wild enthusiasm with which Gillen pursued the enquiry.

It is no wonder. Such a chance has been given to very few men, and when it comes it so seldom happens that the right men are there to take it. On the whole, take it all in all, Australia has been very fortunate in its men, from Eyre and Grey down (in front of time) to Howitt, Roth, Gillen and yourself. All have been Englishmen (I do not speak of Strehlow, whose work I have not studied); I do not remember that there has been any Scotchman to speak of among them.

I wish you would write and let us know your plans. We hope we shall still find you in England on our return. But the date of our return is uncertain, depending largely on my wife's health, which, though not bad, is not so good as we could wish. We may go for a time to the Riviera for the sake of sunshine before returning to the cloudy skies of England. However, we ought not to grumble after the splendid summer and autumn of this year, of which you have been able to judge for yourself.

I continue my long labours at Ovid, correcting proofs and examining photographs of manuscripts, a rather tedious task in pages and practically in its final form. If, or rather when, you write let me know your decision as to your future plans of work. Is it to be Tierra del Fuego or Australia? You know I am for Australia and bear a grudge at the bad man unknown who is poaching on what should be your preserves. Is there any chance of your coming over to Paris? We expect to be here till well on in January. My wife joins me in affectionate greetings and in all hearty good wishes for the New Year.

Yours always very sincerely  
James G. Fraser

My wife bids me tell you to come and join us here as you did early in the year. Come at any time. You will always be more than welcome.