

Pitt Rivers Museum ms collections
Spencer papers Box 1a F-H

Spencer papers Box 1a F Stirling

Letter F2

[Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery of South Australia
Adelaide] 8th May 1902

Dear Spencer,

Your last has been too long unanswered but I have been on the grind & besides I wanted to be able to tell you of an arrangement I propose which I think should end your reproaches re specimens. This winter I am going to send Zeitz over to your Museum – the Australian Museum & perhaps [insert] the [end insert] Brisbane. He knows all we have got and no doubt we can [insert] not only [end insert] square off the debt you say, & no doubt with justice, is owing by us to you but make a fresh deal. Besides I want him to see how you have done your ethnology.

I know you treated us well enough in re Horn Exped'n things – but Sydney did not for of the birds we only got a very few common species

However we will try & do the fair thing by you & we have always Diprotodon to fall back upon for I don't expect you have got much of him.

I don't exactly know when Zeitz will be coming round to you – probably June or July when it is too damp to work at the bones. I myself hope to pass through Melbourne en route to Brisbane but that will be later on. Zeitz however will have plenary powers.

I expect you [insert] also [end insert] will be pretty hard at work with the results of your trip – I do curse these lectures which take up so much time & energy

Gillen was with us a night on his way home – more talkative than ever – I don't think anyone else got a word in all the evening. He said you were coming over again.

Believe me

Sincerely yours

E.C. Stirling

Letter F3

[Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery of South Australia
Adelaide] 25th July 1902

My dear Spencer,

Having left your letter unanswered for so long – I left it a day or two more to tell you of Gillens lecture. It was a great success. he spoke it very well having subordinated his Irish exuberance of speech. The Town Hall was "cram" full and the slides & gramophone went very well on the whole. He is to repeat the lecture at the University in a few weeks where we can do his lantern business better. Everyone was pleased & Gillen finds himself a celebrity. Miss Lambert came to see me & of course I will do all I can for her – so far all I have been able to do is to lend her the use of my name for getting books out of the P.L. but I think she understands that I am at her disposition and were the weather better I should like to see her at the Mount but there at least there is nothing but rain for a month or two.

As regards Museum matters I am afraid now that Zeitz may not be able to get over to the other Colonies. There is a regular panic in the establishment in consequence of threats to cut down our grant to the bone – They are sure to cut off a lot but we don't know yet exactly what is to be done. All salaries will have to be reduced & God knows what will be left for general expenditure. Anyhow Zeitz will not go till we know our fate. ~~He~~ As to Diprotodon model. This does not exist yet. It is a long story which will keep till I see you – all that we have sent the B.M. is a fore & hind leg (actual bones) – Between the BM & ourselves we hope to get a model but as regards our share of the job, which will be costly, I don't know how we shall find funds to get it done if all the threatened reductions come off. However I will tell you how the matter stands when I see you as I hope to be in Melb. or passing through [insert] to Sydney [end insert] towards the end of next month.

You may be sure that I will do all I can to get you considered under the "most favoured nation clause".

As to the Ethnological matters this would have been so easy of adjustment if Zeitz were able to go over for he knows all the details of this department much better than I. I have not altogether given up hopes of his going for I want him to see what you have done though it is

doubtful if he will admire anything that is not done by himself – or at least not “done in Germany”. Many of these Germans do try my patience.
I will let you know later of our proposed arrangements (I mean as to Zeitz’s movements) for we shd. know our fate shortly.
Since I got your letter I have had a bad bout of gallstone colic but am now all right & have been so for the last 2 wks. It is very painful.
Believe me
Sincerely yrs
E.C. Stirling
I am glad to hear the book is going so well

Letter F4

[Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery of South Australia
Adelaide] 5th Nov’r. 1902

My dear Spencer,

Thanks for your letter. Zeitz will be over in Melbourne on the 18th inst for a week to attend the ornithological congress & will of course come & see your things he will also know what we have got. I want myself to come over but during next week we have some garden parties and the exams are the week after so I don’t now when I shall get over – This is just the nicest time at Mt. Lofty and I am loath to leave it with the garden in its full beauty.

Miss Lambert was up with us last night – she is a good style of girl. I took the chair at her lecture the other night. It was all good stuff but too long – it took just 1 1/2 hour for her to reach the real subjects. She had a middling good audience but unfortunately she fixed on a night with counter attractions elsewhere which was a pity considering what she had to say. I have seen sundry notices about the finances of Melb. University which are not good reading & I have also seen the progress report of the Commission which is worse I was under the impression that you had a better hold of your politicians than we have here with ours but it does not seem so – Our position is by no means satisfactory but there is nothing to be alarmed at if only we are let alone. Fortunately – very fortunately – at this time our Gov’t. subsidy is under an act & the upper house as at present constituted would stand by us. But as regards the museum we come under the estimate and everything has been cut down to starvation point. For the rest of the year we can spend practically nothing and everybody’s salary has been reduced about 20%

I am glad to hear the book is getting on.

Where are you going for a trip this summer & when?

Sincerely yrs

E.C. Stirling

Letter F5

[Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery of South Australia
Adelaide] 26th June 1903

Dear Spencer

I am sending you by intercontinental steamer on Saturday a case containing a set of the casts of the manus & pes bones of Diprotodon Australis with stands to set them on. These I hope you will receive in good order. I enclose a tabular list of the names & reference marks to facilitate identification & arrangement & with this & my memoir on the subject you will have no difficulty in setting them up.

I hope the Peragale reached you in good order I was not certain what you would like to do with it & so sent it off alive.

Thanks for the Sequirity seeds and the two papers.

Sincerely yours

E.C. Stirling

Letter F6

[Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery of South Australia
Adelaide] 6th Oct. 1903

My dear Spencer,

Much obliged to you for the Waratah seeds which seem good. I am planting some myself, or rather have done so, & I will give more to another gardener so as to have an extra chance.

Let me know if & when you get any plants before sending them along as we have some absurd regulations about admitting plants from your Colony which will require to be circumvented & when I know that you have them I will instruct you as to the way to send them.

You did not allude to Olsen-Leffer's letter – if you have done with it send it back as I ought to answer it. No hurry about Wynyardia

Sincerely yours

E.C. Stirling

Pitt Rivers Museum ms collections

Spencer papers Box 1a G Field

Letter G1

Boys returned last night no luck J.F.

Alice Springs

Jany 30th 96

Prof Spencer

University Melbne

Dear Sir

I duly received your letter also bottle of spirits. Have not succeeded in getting you a mouse like the one you sent but have hopes of doing so before mail leaves. Two niggers are out now & should be home tomorrow.

The only information I can give you about he brittled tailed [sic] is what I have gathered from the Blacks. It does not burrow and is nocturnal. Generally found on Salt bush flats. When hunting for Kangaroos with dogs have often started one up & if fast enough disappears into the Eloota holes. Blacks say I disturb them when sleeping. Do you want any more skins? Did you get my last lot of Rats think I sent them in October or November. Were the young ones the progeny of the Little fat tailed rats (I forget the scientific name!) & when did I send the one you have honoured by calling after me?

Thanks yes had a very enjoyable Xmas & New Year & a fair share of the good luck at Races. The Pontiff [Gillen] with his usual good luck (he calls it knowledge) won a nice little amount. Fortunately for Besley he was sent to Tennant's Creek in November & cam out on the right side of the Book. He appears to be able to do biz better from a distance. Had a letter from Cowle. He feels Daers death a good deal. As he is now in charge of the Illamurta Camp He will be able to keep the new man in his proper place. If I have any luck with the mice will send by mail & mention it in this. Mr Gillen has been very hard at work with the Anthropological work for the last month & by the look of the budgets he is sending by mail I think you will have your time fully occupied for a few days. We are all sick of the name of his work. Never hear anything else mentioned & it is amusing to see him trying to corner people off to tell them something fresh he has discovered, Trust this will find you & yours in good health Kindest regards

Yours sincerely

Jas. F. Field

Letter G2

Private Hospital

Hutt Street

January 29th 1901

My dear Professor

Very many thanks for your kind letter & good wishes. Am glad to say everything is going on satisfactorily Dr Marten thinks that he will be able to let me out of the Hospital in a weeks time so am anxiously looking forward to the time to come. Had a few lines from Gillen last week telling me that the Expedition would not start until the beginning of April Am rather pleased to hear this because I think it is bound to Rain before then. If the original programme had been carried out you would have had an awful trip. Have never seen the country looking so bad before Only one patch of feed (at Ryans Well) between Tennant Creek & Oodnadatta. Had to ~~home~~ [insert] send [end insert] my Horses back from Charlotte Waters to Mt Burrell & since then one has died & two others not expected to live. Do not expect to leave Adelaide before the end of April so am sure to see you here & probably again at the Tennant. The prospects of getting a big collection of bugs & Beats at TK are not very good especially the latter The

droughts have just about w..ed [illegible] them all out but I will be glad to do anything I can for you. Hope you have sent a good supply of Spirits by Camel. Gillen called to see me twice after his return from Melbourne but was not the same old [illegible] so did not get much [illegible] If my foot continues to improve I hope to pay Moonta another visit early in March & probably go to Melbourne in April. Have a lot of eggs for Keartland to [illegible]

Hope this will find you & yours in the best of health

Kindest regards

Yours sincerely

Jas F. Field

Letter G3

Delighted to say that I am losing the "laugh" at last. Think I have had a fair share of it

Tennants Creek

Feb 16th 1902

My dear Professor

Yours of Nov 15th received & was pleased to hear that you were both well. From what you say about Borrooloola I gather it must be a wretched hole to live in & have often wondered how you were putting in the time during December & January I reckon Gillen would have prickly heat so bad that it would take you all your time to prevent him from doing something desperate The Port Darwin operators say that folk [?Jolly] expects his new Steamer this week so you will probably be released by the end of this mail Your libel on TK [Tennant Creek] appeared in the Leader & caused a few remarks to be passed that were not polite!

If you had stayed here for another month think you would have some cause to complain. We had a very dry time during November & December & it looked as if half the stock would perish but a thunderstorm emptied itself over the Station & started the creek running which set us up nicely since then have had 3.90 points & green grass growing right up to the House. So far Scott has fared badly & by the way the wind sticks to the S.E. afraid we are not going to have a general Rain.

The little chap starts for Town on the 21st inst & might go to Melbourne. If so he will no doubt call on you Byrne returned to CW last week but have not spoken him Think he had one of the usual pleasant holidays. Is it not a pity that he cannot drink in moderation Had a few words with Cowle while at A.G. said he had a very good time & spent his cheque. Have had very little luck with Moths &c since you left but they have started to come about since the Rain Will probably send you some by next mail. Have missed some beautiful butterflies through not being able to jog after them Sent Mr French some Bugs & will have another lot ready shortly. He has not acknowledged receipt yet. Although there has been plenty of time. You will probably receive this in Melbourne where I am addressing it. Hope you found Mrs Spencer & the children well &

Kindest regards

Yours very sincerely

Jas. F. Field

Letter G4

Tennants Creek

22 Oct. / 02

My dear Professor

Yours of 12th August just received & very pleased to hear that you were then OK In a letter I received from Mr French sometime ago he said you had been so busy since you returned that it was difficult to get more than [sic] "How are you" or "Good day" out of you. Very pleased to hear of your successful Lectures & the coin they realised. Must look up the Leader for the account Keartland still sends them along & I find a lot of interesting matter in them. Have I heard about the O'Gillens Lectures. Rather! Who has not. He swelled so much that he had to take to bed with a bad throat. At present I am considering what he wants me to do. Received four papers this mail. Neither of them containing anything about himself & a short time ago received a memo asking if I required anything there is some motive in this Probably additions required to his collection of weapons –

We are still battling with Drought & stock are having a very bad time. You will no doubt remember what this place looked like when you were here. picture it now after practically 19 months without Rain A more desolate God forsaken hole I do not think you could find anywhere Of course we are still hoping for a good season & I must say the prospects are

good. Thunderstorms all around daily & Rain has been recorded in the N.T. [Northern Territory] several times. With another bad season Banka Banka will be a thing of the past as it is [sic – I] am very much afraid Scott & I are not going to get half as much out of it as we have put in. No more speculations Dont think you need to be afraid of anybody getting ahead of you with that Lizard No one has been collecting here & doubtful if the season would allow it Eastward Hope TK has provided something new to science. Would much like to hear the phonograph records. Can quite understand city people taking an interest in them Thanks. The foot has been behaving very well during the past 3 or four months The skin has set now & can stand a lot more pressure & have also got rid of the shooting pain I had when you were here Am living in hopes of visiting Melbourne some day & have a big alteration made to the foot & leggings part of it. I think a less cumbersome affair could be made.

The view from your window is slightly different to the one I get from mine Have almost forgotten what green grass is like. I gave Scott your message & he is going to give me a reply in the morning to add to this The little chap is not feeling too gay at present Has just had news of his Brother in laws suicide. The drought is so bad & water so scarce at BK that he has had to remove everything to the Taylor & Stirling. Both wells failing fast & scarcely sufficient water for domestic purposes so taking it all round he is having a very bad time. I have our cattle on the Warminnie Rockhole (Gillen has another name for it I think but this is what the natives call it) about 40 miles S.E. Think it is one of those you visited Its the last chance for the poor brutes.

Spent five days with Mr & Mrs Kell last July. It was like a glimpse of civilization again but rather too fashionable in their meal hours for my digestive organs Mrs K is very jolly & I quite enjoyed the change.

Spent a night with Richard K Fox's admirer. He was in good form as hes [illegible] you & Gillen got on going home in the Boat. Hope you found Mrs Spencer & the children well They would be delighted to have you at home again & from what Mrs Gillen says in her letters you are not to go away again on any account.

Kindest regards & best wishes for an enjoyable time during the coming festive season which will probably be spent in your Den writing up back work

Yours very sincerely

Jas. F. Field

Letter G5

Tennants Creek

March 29th / 03

My dear Professor

Very pleased to hear that you have such success with your Lectures but it beats me how you can find time to do so much. The master mind of Moonta has been so busy preparing his Corroborees that he has not been able to find time for letter writing for nearly a year. Mrs G apologised for him this mail said poor Frank has not a minute that he can call his own.

Am glad you asked for the Lizard skins. Think I will be able to get some in a week or two. An old friend of yours "Anna Maria" has promised to start out next week & as she is the most reliable hunter here I have hopes of securing a few specimens. Sorry that Chance will not be here to do the skinning He always liked the job! –

You will be glad to hear that we have at last had a splendid Rainfall. Nearly six inches recorded in five days & a nice steady soaking rain Was unable to move away from the station for a week owing to the Boggy state of ground. The clouds came from the S.E. so I think very heavy Rain must have fallen in North NSW or Sth Queensland. A week previous there was no sign of any & every appearance prospect of one of the worst droughts known in these parts. All is now changed & green grass shooting up everywhere. Your "typical TK scenery" spot has green feed a foot high all over it

Re Stone Implements. Thanks I have not forgotten what you told me & am annexing all I can lay hands on. Think I must have at least 150 now, all collected since you were here also a number of stone axes, tomahawks & spears. They have cost a good sum in Tobacco pipes &c but I think I will be able to get some interest on the outlay during the next 10 years. I hear you have written to the papers cautioning people against rushing to the Winnekes Depot field They are either too foolish to take your advice or have more money than they know what to do with. The field is almost a proved swindle already & hundreds will have to turn back without having a try. The Brokers in Adelaide assisted by false reports from Dr Chewings & others ran some of the shares up to a fictitious price & then sold out. People on the field are

just beginning to realise that they have been had & McFeat says he expects some one will have a job to find the pieces of the remains after the mob have finished with the Doctor. There are one or two really good shows out there but they will not be able to sell until investors forget what has occurred Everything flourishing in the garden & hope to have a better crop than last year. Cattle are still selling well & we hope to dispose of everything this year. Scott send kindest regards. Poor Cowle went to Town last train very ill. The Doctor thinks he is either suffering from the effects of a sunstroke or Locomotor Ataxia Kearnan of Charlotte Waters told me that he could walk a little but was very shaky & looked a perfect wreck. Am very anxious to hear what the Doctor says on his arrival in Adelaide & must get my Brother to find out & wire me Mrs Kell received your letter by last mail They are all well. She looks after Hubby too well to allow his shadow to decrease. Is he not a fearful size & when he laughs the building sways about just as if an earthquake was travelling past. Trust this will find you & yours in the best of health with kindest regards

Believe me

Yours very sincerely

Jas. F. Field

Letter G6

Tennant Creek

Octr 2 – 03

My dear Professor

After a long wait I succeeded in getting two very fair specimens of Lizards from the Downs but am afraid I made a rather bad job of the skinning How does your man manage the tail part? I tried without slitting below the arms but could only get about three inches clear & then had to use the knife Tore back skin a little & altogether made a hash of it. If more had been procurable I would have destroyed the two but did not do so. Have sent them down by Hanley to be forwarded to you from Oodnadatta by Rail. The parcel was too large for parcels post. You will probably receive them in about two months from date. Heard from Moore that you & Gillen have been amongst the natives around Williams Creek & doing the usual good work Hope you had an enjoyable outing. Foster is rearing those young Native Cats for me a lubra brought them in when very young but had eaten the mother want to settle the argument about the pouch Two are females & there is a spot on the Belly of each which certainly looks like the formation of a pouch. Will let you know results later on. The Winnecke field is just about defunct. We have had droves of disappointed miners passing every week for the last two months. Most of them on foot & penniless so our flour bag has had a big call on it. Am anxious for the next mail to arrive to hear further news from Cowle In his last letter he said the Doctor had cabled for the 'Radium Rays' & was going to try what effect it had on him I hope he will get some relief if not a complete cure. Many thanks for photo. It is a very good one. Pleased to hear the Book has been completed, You will soon have the copy on market & I hope make a good thing out of it.

Gillen has not written for ages but sends me the Australasian regularly ever week. I wish the Govt would give him a station where there is not so much work & more salary The constant strain will I think make him grey headed (if there is any hair left)

Expect a two months collection of mails to arrive here Early next week so may get some news from them

Banka Banka has started paying Dividends at last Received a nice cheque for 250 last week & expect another by the end of year which will I think be the last. Rain is again wanted to enable purchasers to remove the stock. Nugent says he intends to go home (N.S.W.) next year. It is forty years since he had the last trip! He will probably find a few alterations in people & places that he used to know. A friend told him the only chance he had of getting there was to go as the Crow flies and keep clear of wayside shanties & small towns. The foot has been behaving very well latterly. Think the cool weather agrees with it but the apparatus around the leg is a source of trouble. The steel Bars have started to wear where they are rivetted on to the heel. Am writing to see if the man who made the affair can supply me with new ones. Will not be sorry when the three years have past so that I can go to Melbourne & have something better made We are to be given a subsid allowance in lieu of Rations after next yer & if the Govt do not pay carriage there will be a dead loss. Camels men are charging £31.4 per ton to here this year & with flour £15 a ton at Oodnadatta it makes living expenses very costly

Mr Jaensch [sic Jaensch] of Powells Creek while at the Helen Springs discovered the tracks of Aborigines Kangaroo Emu Native Companions & Wallaby in the rock above the spring. Some of the tracks can be traced for 30 yards and are very distinct. He says there is also an impression of a very large Birds foot which he thinks might have been cut out by the Blacks but all the others are genuine This spring is situated about ten miles south of the Powell close to the Telegraph Line Curtis says he has heard the Blacks speaking about a similar place on Mosquito Creek about 80 miles S.E. from here. Have written to Dr Stirling about it & if either of you think the discovery of any scientific value I will go out to Mosquito creek after Rain falls & see if the place is to be found & what the tracks are like. Hope this will find you & yours in the best of health. Foster sends kindest regards. Best wishes to you
Yours very sincerely
Jas. F. Fielding

Pitt Rivers Museum ms collections
Spencer papers Box 1a H Hickson

Letter H2
[S.J. Hickson]
Downing College
Cambridge
May 22, 1887
My dear Spencer

It has been my intention for some weeks to write to you but I have been so busy settling into my rooms & my work this term that I have been constrained to postpone it.

I hope this letter however will reach you before the sailing ship ~~Paramatta~~ [insert] Oneida [end insert] arrives for a particular friend of mine Mr Thies will arrive in her & I am sure you will be glad to make his acquaintance. I think his voyage to Australia has been undertaken for the benefit of his health but still he is likely to be sufficiently well to move about as an ordinary person I should be very glad if you could help him to see the sights of Melbourne or put him in the way of any excursions in the vicinity or the surrounding country which he may like to undertake.

Well, I wonder how you are getting on in your new world & new life. I suppose by this time you have already completed your preliminary course of lectures & are beginning to attract crowds of young Australians into the fair & beautiful path of morphology. But it is no use speculating about you because I am sure you will do well & I hope you will write & tell me in what line your progress travels apace.

As to myself, I am in very much the same condition as I was in when you left Oxford. I am settled now in my rooms in Downing & I stroll round to the Museum every day to continue my researches on the Millepora & the Alcyonaria. Beyond the simple fact that I have discovered the history of the sexual organs in the former I have nothing much to report but as I am now completely restored to health I hope to be able to work in the future with that youthful ardour & enthusiasm which was lost to me last term & then perhaps I may be able to forward some printed material for your perusal.

Of our friends in Oxford I know but little. Poulton came up here last Saturday for a meeting of the Physiological Society & stayed with me in college. He is working still at pupae etc with great diligence & undoubtedly making a great reputation for himself.

I went to Town in April to see Balfour safely married but I have heard nothing of him since. His wedding was a very grand affair in Marylebone Church & went off very well. His bride was a very good looking young girl & seemed to be very much pleased with the whole affair. I have not heard from Bourne lately but when I last saw him he was hard at work at the old grind & seemed contented & happy. He is to be married this Long Vac. I believe but I have heard no [illegible] particulars.

I heard from Moseley yesterday but he gave me no news of himself.

Sclater is still demonstrating up here & on his off days he is researching on the development of Peripatus His [illegible] (from Demerara) seems to develop in the earlier stages like a mammal. That is to say there is no yolk & yet after [illegible] a blastoderm is found on one side of [illegible] He is probably going out to the Museum at Calcutta (this between ourselves for the present) The Museum at Singapore will probably go to von Sendenfeld.

Caldwell is back from Australia but I have not yet seen much of his work Of course being newly married & only just settling into his house he has not yet had much opportunity. I

cannot say much for my own prospects here. There are 12 men & women engaged in morphological research at the present Since I as most of these are occupying the minor teaching posts there is nothing left for me but I must live in the spirit of Mr Micawber & hope that something will "turn up".

There were two books I left behind in Oxford which I have been unable to find since you left, one is the Gradus at Cantabrigian & the other Calverly's poems, I wish you would look through your books to see if you have taken away by mistake.

I saw Fowler & his wife in Oxford during the Easter Vacation & he has kindly offered to put me up during the British Ass. at Manchester this year I shall not go away much this long Vacation as I have so much work on hand & do not deserve a holiday, but I may run over to Holland once for a week or so to do some work in the Dutch libraries & museums. I have not begun my book but I am gradually collecting the material together.

I suppose you have not yet come across any Alcyouaria for me. I think most probably I shall begin my ~~work on~~ monograph of the Stlouigrous Alcyouaria as soon as I have got my Millepores & one or two other little things off my hands. Mind you write to me soon & let me know how you are

I remain

Yours very truly

Sydney J. Hickson

P.S. Sclater sends every good wish & form of greeting to you.

Letter H3

[S.J. Hickson]

35 Highbury New Park

London N

Jan 1 1889

My dear Spencer

Let me commence by wishing you a very happy New Year. May your new year be a more happy & prosperous one than the year which is just past. For my own part I can think of no year in the whole course of my life which has been so disastrous to me or left me in such an unsatisfactory position. I thought when the year commenced that whatever might be my chances for the Oxford chair I was in a fair way to obtain some more or less prominent position but now I find myself ...ed [illegible] from Oxford & absolutely without prospect of any sort or description.

It is possible that you may have heard of the result of the election of Dec 8th but nevertheless would not take it amiss if I repeat my version of it.

At the beginning of last term the Visitorial board decided that the Board of Electors to the chair should be asked to elect a deputy for 1889 at £500 (I had only £300). I believe there would have been no opposition to me if Lankester had not thought that the new Deputy elected by the board would be in a very strong position for the chair & consequently himself applied for the post of deputy for 1889. The scent of battle brought in other war horses & the candidates battled with testimonials, petitions etc as if seeking for a permanent post. The result of it all was that by a side wind Acland succeeded in pushing in Jackson, & Lankester was rejected.

The feeling in Oxford generally was anti-Lankester & most of the Sciences Professors were undoubtedly not very sorry that he was rejected but a great deal of sympathy was I believe felt for me at being so roughly pushed out of my place. I feel it very much, for after working so hard at Oxford in a post which I was invited to take up by the V.C. in convocation I am superseded by a man whose name is hardly known either in Oxford or out of it who has never published a single observation or even opinion in his life, I receive no word from any official to the effect that I have been replaced nor any recognition of the work I have done for the lab. during my year of office.

So you see we still have our troubles even in the dear old mother country. You may envy us our libraries & societies but our pig-headed traditions & unscrupulous though influential humbugs are often enough to drive a right-minded man to the Colonies.

But now to business. I am very much obliged to you for sending me the Alcyouaria I will work them up as soon as I possibly can & let you have a preliminary report at once,. They have not yet arrived but I will let you know at once when they do. Your letter of Oct 1. & your paper on the Earthworm arrived safely. Many thanks. What larks your Earthwarm castings must be. Work away at these things I dont believe that people think so much nowadays of a complete

& accurate bibliographical knowledge & there is really good observation & illustrations Your earth-worm paper licks into fits all the work that has been done by other worm men & is sure to have a right royal welcome here.

You might like to know what I intend to do now. Well of course financially I am almost "broke" as the saying is but I shall stay at home with my people for the present & try to get out my book on Celebes before I seek for any other appointment. Lankester has offered me a place in his laboratory so that I can go on with my research upon the Hydrocorallines & Alcyonarians it is exceedingly jolly to feel that I have plenty of interesting work to do & all my time my own although it may not be so pleasant to be obliged to look twice at every half-crown.

I am very much amused to hear about your Mueller & McCoy. I should think though that you would soon get the whip hand of those old boys in Melbourne. I envy you your beautiful laboratory & your excursions into the unknown parts of Victoria. I hope you will land a new Monstreum or something exciting. What grand possibilities you ~~must~~ will have if you should chance to come across a good old cave.

Have you heard anything about Thomas since you have been out. I am afraid he is not the stamp of man to do anything without monographs, but I understand that he is very happy in Auckland.

There is nothing of any very great importance going on in England just now. Poulton's translation of Weismann's papers is likely to be very interesting & important.

The English school has gone in very completely for Weismannism but the Americans stick to their Neo-lamarckism. There is likely to be a great flare up between us sooner or later but for my own part I think the Neo-lamarckian will get the worst of it, & collapse pretty soon. There is a book by Cope called I believe the "Selection of the fittest" which explains the Neo-Lamarckian platform.

I am going on with my work on the development of Hydrocoralliums I am finding some very curious & interesting facts in Allopore but do not see my way to publishing just yet.

My brother is coming to Melbourne in January or February I will tell him to call on you but I am not quite sure if my letter will reach him in time. He is a partner in a merchants firm at Calcutta & will be travelling in Australia on business I am not sure how much time he will have at his disposal as he is hurrying to get home after 5 years absence.

I am very glad the "gradus" has turned up I was afraid I had lost it. It was given to me by an old uncle & I have a curious affection for it

I will write again to you about Easter to tell you how things are going on at Oxford & elsewhere. At present we are all standing on tiptoe to see what is going to happen

With best wishes,

I remain

Yours very sincerely

Sydney J. Hickson

P.s. I haven't seen any of the old boys for some time so was unable to give your messages. William was obliged for your offer but does not think it sufficiently tempting. He has not yet abandoned the G.O.M.

Letter H4

[Ellesmere House

Withington]

Dec 25 1900

My dear Spencer

I was very glad to hear from you again the other day & to know that all is well with you. I hope you will have a good time in the wilds of the north with your colleague Gillen. I envy you the grand opportunities you get of doing field work. It seems almost impossible for us in Manchester to get away for more than the customary 2 months in the summer. Our University machinery is so complicated that it would be ~~ab~~ very difficult for a temporary deputy to do the necessary work. However I am hoping some day when my children are a little older to get leave of absence for a summer. At present I am very busy indeed having undertaken to write the article on Ciliata & Suctorea for Lankester's Zoology before the ~~long~~ end of March. I have got some interesting new results on Dendrocometes which I shall include in it.

I want to separate these two groups from the other Protozoa under the name Heterokaryota so they have in all cases two kinds of nuclei with different functions No other cells nor animals in the A.K exhibit such a phenomenon These two groups too are the only ones that exhibit

cilia & they ought to be widely separated from the Hagillata which are much more primitive. I am also at work on Alcyouaria having another large consignment including several very interesting forms from the Cape waters and elsewhere. I shall send you in a few days my first paper on the cape Alcyouarians.

We are getting on pretty well in the matter of research but we are sadly in want of some Fellowship in place of the old Berkeley fellowships which have ceased to exist.

There is absolutely no encouragement now for a man to stop a year to do research with us, the poor men have no prospect & the rich men go to Cambridge or Plymouth to carry on their investigations.

However Gamble is doing brilliantly His last paper with Keeble on Colour change in Hippolyte is regarded as one of the finest things of recent years. Have you read it? Ashworth has gone as a junior demonstrator to Ewart at Edinburgh & is giving them some notion there about Invertebrates. I have got in his place a young Cambridge man named Laidlaw who was on the Skeat expedition in [insert] the [end insert] Malay peninsula & has got extensive & peculiar knowledge of the land mollusks [sic] & other things He promises well. Miss Hatt is also working in the Research lab'y on some Falkland island marine worms to test the bipolar theory.

I know really very little of the goings on in other labs as I have not been South since the summer and very few people come north at this time of year. I am going up to London in a few days however to have a chat with Lankester about various things. I wonder when Gregory's place at the British Museum is going to be filled up. It is still vacant. By the way If you see Gregory give him my kind regards & thanks for the papers he sent to me the other day. If there are any papers of ours he would like to have I will send him copies of those we have still in stock

Thanks for sending me the "Gradus" It has not come yet but I expect it in due course I am glad to hear that Roth has got a post that suits him. I should like to see him again.

Talking about the photo of old Oxford days I heard of Lewin the other day He is quite flourishing in a good practice G.C. Bourne is a Colonel in Militia now & has, so I heard, gone to S Africa with his regiment He has been on military duty now some 15 months & his zoological & tutorial work has for the time come to a full stop. I do not know exactly what Fowler is doing ~~now~~. He left University College when Minchin was promoted over his head & is living at Richmond. He does not seem to write much nor put in an appearance at the Societies nor other meetings Hoping to hear soon of some success in your expedition

I am

Yours very sincerely

Sydney J. Hickson

Transcribed by Alison Petch June 2015