

'Belcher, P Dudley'

Publication/Creation

1913

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BELCHER, P DUDLEY.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

'12/'13

H.M.M.

2 April 1913.

Dear Sir,

Mr. P. Dudley Belcher tells me you have in your possession a very interesting case of primitive instruments. When you next visit England, which I understand will be next year, I should be glad if you would call on me and let me see them.

I enclose a syllabus of the HistoricalbMedical Museum to be held in London in the coming summer. Should you be able to send me any objects of medical interest for exhibition, I should much appreciate your kindness.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I am,

Yours very truly,

M. M. Vicker Smyth Esq.,
c/o Commercial Travellers' Club,
St. George's Terrace,
Perth,
Western Australia.

H.M.M.

2 April 1913.

Dear Mr. Belcher,

I desire to thank you very cordially for taking so much trouble in collecting the notes and information concerning "Whistlecocking", which I have perused with much interest.

I trust we may be able to obtain the loan of the case of instruments you mention from Mr. McVicker Smyth next year.

Again thanking you,

I am,

Yours very truly,

P. Dudley Belcher Esq.,
Hotel Esplanade,
Perth,
Western Australia.

Copy of letter concerning sexual operations in Australia, ("whistle-cocking" etc.)
from Mr. P. Dudley Belcher
to Mr. Hector, Manager, B.W. & CO., Australia.
(Original letter filed in Early Correspondence: Primitive)

Hotel Esplanade,
Perth.
Western Australia.

16th Jan. 1913

Dear Mr. Hector,

This evening I have had the pleasure of spending with Mr. M. M^cVicker Smyth, Inspector for the Nobel Explosive Co. of Glasgow. This gentleman travels to all parts of the world for his company, and is at present spending three years in Australia.

He takes a very keen interest in Native customs, and has made an exceptionally fine collection of Native weapons, and also of articles used in their sacred rites. Amongst these are two articles which will be of very special interest to Mr. Wellcome; and I have been trying to obtain the loan of them for the Historical Exhibition which is to be held this year.

I will first explain a most peculiar custom which is practised by the Natives of this State. You may possibly know that they take precautions of a somewhat diabolical nature to limit the number of their offspring. The males are subjected to an operation known as "Whistlecocking;" with the exception of a certain few in each tribe.

First let me explain that in this State, and I believe also in Queensland, circumcision is practised. This is done by drawing forward as much of the skin as possible. It is then cut, or rather hacked off, by means of flint "knives." The penis, which by this means is practically skinned, is then smothered in mud and wrapped in a soft bark known as paper-bark. This operation is performed when the youth is about 12 to 16 years of age. After recovery from this treatment the poor wretch is "whistle-cocked." That is to say, the urethra is split open by the same awful instrument. This is done in a series of operations, a little being ~~done~~ at a time, and when the wound has healed, a little more is done until the whole length has been opened. The idea of doing this is to prevent the seminal fluid being introduced into the female.

You will readily imagine that this is a very sacred rite, and the instrument with which it is done is kept by the Chief or King. Mr. M^cVicker Smyth was recently fortunate in securing a case of these knives. It consists of a piece of kangaroo hide about five inches long and about two inches wide in which the knives are kept. There is a cover to it made of eum feathers matted together with clay and blood. The inside is lined with down from the eagle-hawk. The knives themselves range from about the size of a crown to the size of a florin. There are

three of them, and one side is ground down to make a hard cutting edge. They are made of a kind of flint. You will realise the rarity of this set when I tell you that there is nothing of the kind in the Museum, and the Government are trying very hard to get it, but Mr. Smyth will not part with it. He will be in England some time in 1914; and he has promised that he will give Mr. Wellcome an opportunity of seeing this curio.

The Government is also trying to get from Mr. Smyth another instrument used on the females. This is an apparatus for breaking the hymen before the young gin is given in marriage. This is a piece of wood shaped somewhat like a pear. The thin end is about a foot in length and about one and a half inches in diameter. This is forced into the vagina of the young "Gin" (as the women are called) and she is then handed over to her husband-elect. These instruments are hidden away, and great precautions taken to prevent anyone seeing them, so that Mr. Smyth has been exceptionally fortunate in getting them. I think I would be right in saying that they are absolutely unique. Will you please be good enough to send a prospectus on the Historical Exhibition, addressing it to Mr. M. McVicker Smyth, c/o Commercial Travellers Club, St. Georges Terrace, Perth.

I am sending this letter to you, Mr. Hector, as I think this story may interest you, and after you have perused it, will you please be good enough to forward it to Mr. Wellcome.

Trusting this letter will come into your safe possession,

Believe me

Yours sincerely,

(signed) P. Dudley Belcher

very
excellent
notes on
the subject
of Whittaker's

A. BEAVOR, Proprietress.

RECEIVED,
31 MAR 1913

Hotel Esplanade

PERTH

WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

16th Jan 1913.

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A. BEAVOR, Proprietress.



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PERTH

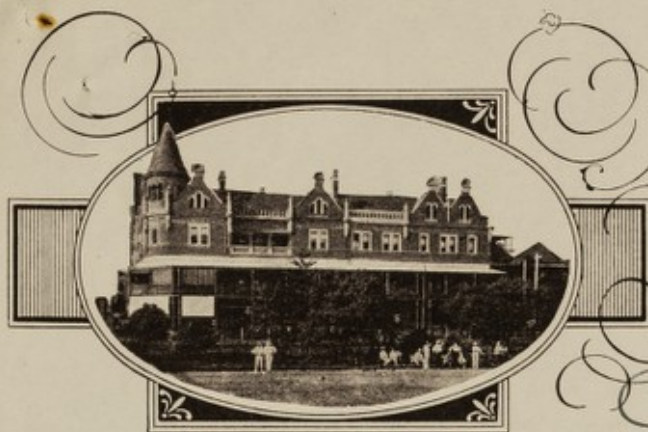
WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

16 Jan 1913

(2)

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16 Jan 1913.

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PERTH

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AUSTRALIA.

16 Jan 1912.

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Trusting this letter will come to your safe possession,

Believe me,

Yours Sincerely,

A. Beavor

Write and thank
Mr. Becher in my
name & say how much
I appreciate his taking
so much trouble in getting
the notes & information
write and send
syllabus & let
the case
to get the
other
and any
other
objection
with
them



Belcher

