

Symon letter 20

Private Mail Bag, Wynbring Siding S.A., 15/12/44

My dear Kilmeny

So glad to hear from you and to know that "America Illustrated by book and picture" was welcomed in Adelaide. I should love to have been present. We seem to have 'kept apart' from just those things about early America that would mean so much in the near future. Scottish Australians etc have always kept their hold on Scotland. Irish Australia is 'venturing' to "scoop the pool" in Australia.

I should love to get intimate with the Mayflower American period and to know how much of the Mayflower is still represented in English families today. I should like to know the finest early Americans of the Washington Irving and other good types. America's best has a British ancestry, hasn't it? We should connect these and so bring fraternity of heritage between the two great English-speaking peoples – the Empire and the American Empire (tho' she jibs at the name). What could they not unite and do for the human race!

I have not received the cuttings you mention nor the books and papers and am rather concerned about my mails. There is no official other than the Ganger and fettlers who are absent during working hours, and the telephone office is locked up, so whether telegrams or messages may come for me I shall have no chance of seeing or hearing of them!

I have three generations of my poor natives here with me, some from the West coast (1918-19) and Ooldea '19 -'35, old and blind some of them but they are much better and so glad to have me here – I feed the women and children but cannot get tea and sugar for them. I can buy flour and sundries without coupons but tho' my tea and sugar would be exclusively for them the Comth Store will not deliver and neither telegraphic nor letter appeal will bring even an acknowledgment from the Minister, but I think these poor things have been getting some quietly with the monies the soldiers give them in passing. I do not ask if this is so but they are quite happy with me and quiet and good and I love all the wee children and what gives me great pride and happiness is that the elders are telling all the tales about Kabbarli and what she did for mothers and sisters and brothers and fathers. That touches me so as they really have no memories as a rule, and I am just the same with the children as I was with their mothers as children and I hear them compare notes.

And all this is so pleasant for me to think of and to know that these dark humans have our own human touches. The heat and drought are dreadful. All my wee wrens have been eaten by the Butcher bird.

I have been trying to get away but unsuccessfully. However my life's work has its reward in these poor remnants and their desire to be with Kabbarli.

God bless you. May the coming year bring Victory to our beloved Empire. What a glorious example England shows the world! I keep my empire ever before me and love to think of her. She never strikes a false note – it isn't in her blood.

I have to suppress my longing for my kind but I shall hope to succeed in my efforts for service. Australia, apart from the war, has never been faced with such a condition of affairs in all her years.

She does not yet realise what it meant when Menzies dropped the Commonwealth helm in “mid-ocean”.

She will pull through please God, but it will be through great suffering.

My mailbag has been very uncertain thro’ the year and as there is no person to take charge of it I have to place it on the fence of the Ganger (leading fitter). It has been most irregular at times and there is no other means of communication with the world!

I have my Dickens for Christmas and Dot and Bob Cratchit and the Chimes will be my Christmas guests. I love to think of you all – just like home – doing your best, quietly, efficiently, without any cantatas[?] Affectionately

Daisy M. Bates

Thanks. Packet of papers just arrived. Howling wind.