

Symon letter 21

Wynbring (Private Mail Bag), 22/12/44

Am writing this hurriedly. Our poor young lad cannot discharge urine[?] but I have no instrument here tho' it's simple to work one.

My dear Kilmeny

The parcel of lovely Home papers came last Friday. "Sturm und Drang" describes the weather, no rain, but terrific gales, and my tents are things of many patches. When I got back last Friday with my supplies, a very unkindly blast of wind had torn the door of my tent, a tear 1½ yards long! And everything had to be put aside till that was mended – a three hours close task! But happily accomplished (I say "happily" because I will not let these things upset my mind. My natives – 19 women were here this morning! And there are sick in camp and dear friend, I am so very happy because 90% are the children, grandchildren and sisters etc. of all my old S.A. camp friends, Bight area, Wirilya (26 miles from Fowlers Bay), Yuria and Ooldea and all are busy recounting their lives with me in those old camps, and Kilmeny darling, it is such a great happiness to me that they all remember, the young ones by hearsay, the others by experience. You know the poor aborigines have no 'memories' – they [daren't?]? of their back lives—but they've kept the memories of my tending[?] upon wives, daughters, sons, mothers, grandmothers and on themselves (the elders) and to think that all these little happenings are being discussed by them in their camps and when they come every morning (only the women and children come; if a man is ill I go to him and then send food and sick things by his woman.

What the group now here with me seems to be trying to do is to gather all those belonging to them and my old camps. They are "Kabbarli's mob" not "Police mobs" and I don't know what things they may tell inquiring passengers but I know whatever they tell them it will be all right and I am so glad I came back here and endured because I am rewarded. You know there was nothing to show for my work amongst them except "remembering" and although the poor sick ones of those camps whom I left in 1935 have passed on (they only wanted feeding like children and there was only me) yet every detail is coming out and my heart rejoices because I am so greatly feeling the strain physically, but I won't relax and we have great fun daily when I give them a little flour and other food. They won't forget Kabbarli and if in the new world that is to come after the war in their [?] continent lets them live their life they will be happy in recalling Kabbarli's old miracles. This has made me so happy. God bless you dear friend and may the New Year bring us all Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards men. I cannot read much at a time but my eyes behave very well. My dearest love and thanks to you for the papers – I'm passing them on.

Affly Daisy M. Bates