

Symon letter 19

Private mail bag Wynbring Siding S.A., 13/9/44

My writing etc needs an apology!!

Dearest Kilmeny,

Drought reigns in these parts and a sullen careless drought that takes no heed of the living things of this earth. Green growths, insect life, birds, wee reptiles, spiders and the duties of all these, rabbits excepted!! And that's adding insult to my feelings!

Not a green thing except one little parakylia growing at the foot of the tree in front of my tent and watered lovingly by me. No lovely purple flower or bud yet and beside it is the thick stalk of a cabbage that the [illeg.] Commonwealth Store sent me, weighing 1 cwt to me! but lasting my cabbage daily penance for 35 days. And no rain. Two days ago, clouds gathered and I arranged my odd vessels for the 1000th time and caught 2 quarts from the lot! It gave me four tea meals with rainwater tea and I thanked God for the lovely taste of it, and have made the old stalk of cabbage a nice little green tiny "tree" near the parakylia. The only green I have to help my eyes.

I cannot read much even of the few papers – Mail, Advertiser, SM Herald and Western Mail (W.A.) In the Advertiser I caught your dear name and the lovely things you collected. All these services of yours have made me long to be near and to see them. The miniature treasures must be perfect of their kind. I have always loved these things.

I do thank God that Victory is coming to us even tho' slowly, but think of the enormity of villainy in the long, long German preparations between the wars! Carried out daily and hourly and secretly and "bribily" thro' those years! I have waited – am still waiting to be called up by the Minister for the Interior to give just those services in connection with all the remaining Austn natives. A whole history of their laws, customs etc etc. that will help Future Governments as it helped me in my successful management of them since 1899/1900 at the R.C. Trappist Mission Beagle Bay. Such a textbook is greatly needed and I spent all my years in studying every phase of their lives, while helping them always.

It is curious that tho' I entered S.A. in 1914 as a member of the Science Congress in 1914, that its successive governments have never made official recognition of my camp life from the Bight to this present area.

I had to banish the natives here from my vicinity and my help. They had gained their horrible knowledge of the latest and most animal vices during my stay in Adelaide 1935-1941 while writing my book and I could not have such a camp near me. My blacks had to have a clean camp always. I don't mean 'hygienically' but the men and women must keep their own laws but be 'clean inside' when in my camps. Our heart, mind, spirit, soul are represented by them in their heart and our mind, spirit and soul are in their liver, kidney and intestines!! These I always stressed and so my camps were free from lust and its 'caste produce'.

I have missed them here Kilmeny, more than I can say. They were the pivot on which I rested and moved and helped and kept gladdened that al was always having 'clean camps'. My loneliness

without them and without my serving their sick and feeble and my regret that I cannot take them back till they come of themselves to me and tell me they are 'clean inside' again. Only they and I know what those two words mean but this is only to your dear self.

Saturday's Mail and Advertiser tell me how well Adelaide is fulfilling her war Services and I love to bring the dear faces of friends there to my "night [illeg.]. I have long nights as I've never used artificial light except my torch for a moment. I must save my eyes! I made that wise resolution.

I am enclosing a small cheque dear Kilmeny, to be added to your "miniatures" sum. Today is warm and dry and the small black ants have come like 'wolves on the fold'. I miss my books – mostly my favourite poets etc. I could always read and reread these, and how glad I am I did so as in my long wakeful nights (I only require 6 hours sleep in the 24) I can open the books and read from them and lose myself in the days when my books and I were together.

My big dream of having a great Library for my years has gone and I cannot do what many old friends at home and in Australia are doing – going to my library for my pleasure and comfort and rest.

God bless you dear friend Kilmeny. You represent Adelaide best to me. I can only "stand and wait" but I won't "grouch". I should love to be back again (with no war) and telling Australia about my adventures as a 'camper' etc.

My dearest love to you,

Affy Daisy M. Bates

(I'm writing crazily, flies and ants abound)