

Letters to L.K. Symon from Daisy Bates - 2

Private Mail Bag, Wynbring Siding, East West Line, 29/4/41

Dear young friend

It was most kind of you to send me the little Dickens and I am accepting it with pleasure as from your dear self. I take it up, and you with it, at my simple and rather scratchy meals and of course I bring to it all the "scenery" connected with it and you and your fine labours in the Book Dept of Thrift].

This little Siding is in connection with my 40 years experiences – sui generis – there is no post, no official, no office – no means of changing money, getting stamps etc etc – And so I have been doing hefty work in my new camp here. The railway rounded off all these funny experiences and I have seen no daily paper since I left Adelaide on March 15th but judging from my own spirit of "carrying on" cheerfully, I have no fear that my kin and kind are nor doing their "darndest" both here and at Home. I've had no letters until April 25th tho' my Private Mail Bag duly arrived empty and was despatched by train empty as I could buy no stamps. Altogether my last camp is the most stirring of all but all my little lares and penates are in their proper places and I am quite happy and hard at work all and every day. This is my first writing day, manual work covering all the others!

I hope all things are going well with our beloved Empire. What an example our Empire's Heart and its people are to us all in the midst of their wreckage. God bless them everyone.

I have come back to my birds and my stars and my bush and all the little tasks of my camp and I rise with or before the sun and go to bed after sunset, "feeling " my bath duties in the gloaming. No raucous rawness of voice and intonation from the urbanised horrors of city life. No neon lights and no city noises.

I place my camps 'out of bounds' whenever I camp not far from Sidings, and so my privacy is undisturbed but there has been heat here and flies and I have had to do all work in fly veils and cannot write veiled. Some young natives – relations of some of my old Ooldea friends (Ooldea is 100 miles west of this camp of mine) came to see me and we have great talks – they had not seen me but knew all about me – and each of the four made me a sacred wooden object with his group's totem decorating it.

I am quite happy and quite strong and love my work. Thanks again for my little Dickens – my eyes much better. Lots of love and kindly thoughts of the Thrift Workers

Daisy M. Bates