

Symon letter 4

Private Mail bag, Wynbring Siding, E-W-Line S.A., 30.6.41

Dear Kilmeny

I remember twice taking some old Native photos of women, wearing trained gowns and shoulder bouquets! And trailing round and looking so pleased with themselves – to your special little nook at Thrift House and forgetting all about them! Now, I don't know where to find them – but I was so keen that kindly Lady Symon should see them because she used to send up bags of Belgian Reject clothing in the last war and I couldn't tell her that they wore and tore in the day's grand trailing! But they gave such joy to the poor women. Will you give my compliments to Lady Symon and tell her that I have never lost sight of that kindly little action – all her own idea I am sure – in giving that pleasure to these poor women and children. Every woman and child in that snapshot is dead. I must try to find the little snapshot.

What tremendous struggles are going on in the world today between the forces of good and evil. All my waking hours at night are spent in prayer for God and King and Empire – “our Trinity”. I work hard during the ten hours of daylight as I cannot do anything in artificial light and so I have those long and quiet hours in communion with all those of my kin and kind, and the lovely friends of my long ago childhood. The quiet of the nights here lends itself to these memories-I am not far from the little Siding and from the many high poles I see beside each fettlers hut. I know the fettlers must have their wireless gear but I don't hear the noise. Just now I've only [illeg.] old natives coming to me daily – all old friends of Ooldea and the great Bight area - Beenuga, Bajjing and Dhabbara (f.) and their men Yalliyalla (Bajjing's man) Koojudi, Beenuga's man and Milyilyi, an invalid now, but a fine strong young man when I left Ooldea in 1935.

Two things I miss greatly, my diaries and my correspondence. I destroyed the former rather than let it go with my MSS Folios. This century is too poor in quality to trust its Pepys! And my diaries went back to 1899. I miss them greatly but the small notebook I kept I do not fill in nightly and I miss my “nightly summings up.

I am longing for a Dickens from the little pencilled list I sent you but perhaps there are none coming in to the Book Room. Did you receive my last letter? I think I sent it to your Home address.

My Private Bag is rather an annoyance than a comfort. It brings the Adelaide “Mail” a week old, only reaches me on Fridays in the “Tea and Sugar train” from Port Augusta and returns on Saturdays Tea and Sugar return train!! It's a lovely morning and I thought of you doing your King's Service in that granite? Building and so have this little chat. The London Illustrated News gives a gruesome view of war. God save King and Empire

Sincerely Daisy M. Bates