

Symon letter 11

Private Mail Bag, Wynbring, S.A. 20/3/43

Dear Kilmeny

A lovely surprise copy of Times and Geographical magazine which I am sure comes from you. And which it is such a pleasure to me to look at, - thoughtful and kind of you. I hope the heat waves are at an end for this season – 117 degrees here twice and then a young “willy willy” came thundering and lightning and tore my tent and did other mischief all of which is remediable and so I am all right, and still a manual labourer. I expect it takes some pluck and courage for all of you in Adelaide with the infinite restrictions and prohibitions and [illeg.] and such like and the couponing – I won’t coupon – and so blithely I do without. I long for a chat with my kind – I draft the wee blue wrens and other small finches. I have no other friends but the birds fully make up for my loss of my old Adelaide and Murray River social company. Thank you so much for thinking of me and remembering my favourite Times. I did not hear the result of your Scottish work. Hope it went off profitably.

Margin note: I do so appreciate your kindly remembrance of me dear Kilmeny in the midst of your own heavy labours. All my friends are labourers in the King’s Service today. God bless them all,
Lovingly Daisy M. Bates

Let me know when you have another Scheme for War purposes. Daisy

PS 20/4/43

Dearest Kilmeny,

I had to open my letter of yesterday which I had ready for postage. The mailbag today brought me your kindly copy of the Times – such a boon to me! And also Arthur Mee’s “Immortal Dawn” that was truly kind of you, but I must tell you that Arthur Mee sent me an autographed copy of the book and I forwarded it to the Lady Muriel Nurses Club after I had read it. He also sent me The Story of the Flag and I sent that to the Labour Prime Minister Mr Curtin, requesting him to kindly place it in the Labour Members Section of the Comth Parliamentary Library!! I received no reply. I also sent another fine book of the kind to the same (Labour) Library, as I thought that perhaps some of the members might discover and read these books! Curiously Kilmeny dear, as I walked up to Wynbring Siding for my Mail Bag this morning I was thinking of the fine Symon Library I saw at Upper Sturt, and visualized you and little Lenore so graciously receiving me there and I’ve always envied the possessors of such libraries. Sir George Murray’s and Prof. Stirling’s were the only other two private libraries I’ve seen in Adelaide as far as I remember. I had a nice little hilly spot in South Perth on the highest eminence there and in my early days of native work I used to dream of the house I should put there, leaving especially one big gum tree, for a little playing ground for child friends. I’ve loved children all my life and am a child with and amongst them. It was a nice little property, one of the best sites in South Perth but as the years went on and I could not give up the work I had started on, I found the taxes etc. going on and increasing owing to the ground being left and so when my funds ran out in S.A. I sold the plot, but I can see now the library I was to have there. Dickens would have a special spot. And so my Dream Library always comes back when I remember those I saw and envied in Adelaide!!

Here in my tent I am so overrun with my 'kitchen' and bedroom and reading room and drawing room and sewing room "lares and penates" that I have to keep my beloved Dickens in a cardboard box in the extra tent. I have in my living tent, which is all these 'apartments' combined! Room only for my little tea tray and that has to make room for my writing, my tray being on a little tin box nearby! You cannot conceive the "clutteredupness" of my tent life! But I manage to have a place for everything and these writing pads and packets of correspondence etc. rest by day on my bed!

I am giving you all these details because I want you to let me return you that fine book of Arthur Mee's. Will you let me do this most unusual thing? And put it in your own library with my dear love and thanks. A most unusual request but I am so certain of your understanding all about it, from my notes here. I don't mention these tent things to anyone. I play a sort of game now and then about them as if I were telling children of the drawing dining pantry, dressing room, chest of drawers etc. etc. and I often wonder if this joking has ever been taken seriously!

Thank you again and again for giving me so much pleasure in writing to me tho' you must be so busy always and in the Times paper which is my chief 'love' after Empire. The S.M. Herald is the nearest in tone and decency to the Times. God bless my friend doing her work so quietly! You are so sweet and restful in yourself.

Affly Daisy M. Bates