

Symon letter 12

Private Mail bag, Wynbring, S.A. 7/4/43

Dear Kilmeny

It is always a pleasure to me to hear from you. We are "Arcades Combo" in a sense – in that we both attend to the essentials of social and pleasant existence. There is always a sentence running in my mind, planted there a long long time ago by some elders "The [illeg.]of gentlehood must be observed"". There's a lot in the little dictum. My mind goes back over 70 years when I first heard it from the 'grown ups'.

God bless you my friend and keep you on your quiet even way, making your own gentle mark as you go. I am so interested in your new scheme "America" and last night, as I lay awake and the whole world seemed 'holding its breath' so quiet was it, I thought of that subject of yours – the America that we can love and respect and enjoy. Among all its delights (to me) are Washington Irving's fine mind and words, James Whitcome Riley's Child poems. Eugene Fields also and Canada's and America's great writers. I think of the pleasure the late John Buchan (one of the same breed as those men I mention, including Emerson when Lord Tweedmuir lived in Canada and contacted like minds and their lovely frivolities and their poems like our Alan Carrol and A.A.Milne. Their love – British in descent – in thought and word - of child life and home life and the understanding that went with these attributes. Mr Purnell seems to have their works also those of Page, America's Ambassador in the last war. That is the America and Canada I love to think of but never had a desire to visit because of the intrusions that come up against one visiting America, or Australia. But the America I love is the America that we British – you and I and all the rest of us – love and esteem and you can intensify our America in your project.

I am glad to tell you the heat has I think departed this Wynbring until next summer. We've had 117° the highest, yet one must do ones daily round and common task but I have been greatly gifted by God, who gave me cheerfulness and courage, the gift of light-heartedness is a great one and can pull me through" all sorts and conditions of obstacles". Do you know that lovely little American poem? I think it is Eugene Fields'.

Upon a mountain height, far from the sea, I found a shell/And to my listening ear the lovely thing/
Ever a song of ocean seemed to sing/Ever a tale of ocean seemed to tell/How came the shell upon
the mountain height?/Ah who can say/Whether there dropped by some too careless hand
Whether there left when ocean swept the land/Ere the Eternal had ordained the day
Strange! Was it not far from its native deep, One song it sang./Sang of the awful mysteries of the
Tide/Sang of the storied sea, profound and wide/Ever with echoes of Old Ocean rang
And as the shell upon the mountain height – sang of the Sea/So do I call, leagues and leagues away,
So do I ever wandering where I may/Sing oh my home, sing oh my home of thee.

Tell me how you get on. I would have loved to have seen your Scotland. Did you ever see a Braemar Gathering in the highlands near Balmoral ? Our beloved Queen Victoria loved that sight.

Lovingly, Daisy M. Bates