

## Cuthbert E Peek's letters from Australia and New Zealand 1882 - 1883

Originals in Devon Record Office, ref 1405M add 3/F6

All letters are signed 'Cuthbert E Peek'

Diary entries appear in italic and are not prefaced with a salutation. The omission of a date does not imply that no entry exists for that date. I regret that time did not allow for more than a brief inspection of the diary.

Original in Devon Record Office, ref 1405M add 3/F7

There are 35 letters, 17 dated 1882 and 18 dated 1883

I have added days of the week in parenthesis, thus, {Monday}

Questionable transcription is indicated thus {?}

*24 August 1882 ... Left Tilbury for Plymouth in the Pacific Steamer "Liguria" for Brisbane, party consisting of ?..? {Captain?} Morris, L Darwin, Mrs Darwin, Miss Morris and Miss Porter, with C Grover and Bayley {?} as servants. ...*

**1882**

**1 September {Friday} SS Liguria**

My dear Father,

We have got on very well with the voyage so far and have had capital weather, though it is now getting rather hot. After leaving Plymouth it was rather rough but we soon got accustomed to it and every one is now on deck. The passengers are most of them Australians who have been home and are now going out again.

One man named Sargood {?} has a party of 21 on board and is on his way to Melbourne. I find plenty to do with the microscope and have got a capital place to work in where it is quite still and no vibration from the screw. It is quite impossible to do anything in the saloon or in our cabin on account of the tremor.

I find Grover most useful as he thoroughly understands the instrument. We have a good deal of work to do every day in preparing for the transit as a great many things can be worked out in advance. Our usual routine is bath 6.30, breakfast 9 o'clock, lunch 1 o'clock, dinner at 6. The food is as yet very good and much better than the "Thames" while there is no smell in any part of the ship.

Last Monday we saw porpoises for the first time, they shift {?} with the ship for a long way and went round her as if she was standing still. On Wednesday we passed close to Madeira and were signalled so I suppose it was in Thursday's paper. The island is most lovely and we could see the vineyards in all directions.

As we passed we noticed a great number of turtles and at first could not make out what they were, as they looked like great brown patches of dirt in the water, there are also a great number of flying fish about which look very pretty, they appear to be able to fly about 20 yards before they fall into the water, I believe they that they fall as soon as the fins with which they fly dry out.

At 1 o'clock today I threw the courier over-board as the captain said that it was the best place to do so, and filled in the position of the ship etc according to the form given, There are two things in which all the officers thought it could be improved, they did not see the use of the tube into which the book is to be placed as there is a chance of the tube cutting the rubber, and also by acting as ballast it prevents the thing rolling with the wind.

Instead of the tube a large india rubber tube might be left through which the book could be passed into the body of the bladder and then this "opening" closed with tapes, the mode of inflation being left as at present. The mode of closing the tube is also defective as I had a good deal of trouble in getting the band neatly round the cover. Instead of this the cover ought to screw down on to a leather washer which would be air tight as soon as screwed down. I expect that we shall be at St. Vincent tomorrow at about noon and we stop there for about 24 hours.

As the small pox is very bad at the Cape we shall not have any communication with the shore and shall get away as soon as possible. We ought to be about 13 days from St. Vincent to the Cape and 18 from there to Melbourne. As we have now got into warm weather the {?..?} are going in cabin all day and keep the place very cool indeed, they consist of strips of sail cloth fastened to rods about 2 feet wide and driven backwards and forwards by the engine.

I have met the farmers from Highweek {?} who are going out to Tasmania. He appears to be a very well educated man. Their boy has had the bad luck to get his ankle crushed in the steering gear and the doctor says he will have a stiff joint for some time, but will probably get well in the end, it is however not a very good beginning. The places we have been at noon are

Aug 27 Lat 46.10 N Long 7.21 W  
 Aug 28 Lat 42.0 N Long 11.0 W  
 Aug 29 Lat 37.12 N Long 14.18 W  
 Aug 30 Lat 32.23 N Long 17.33 W  
 Aug 31 Lat 27.26 N Long 20.1 W  
 Sep 1 Lat 22.21 N Long 22.28 W

If you get a "track chart" and send it up to Coles with the above he will draw the course on it.

Saturday. We expect to be at St. Vincent at about 3 o'clock today but I am closing this as I do not know when the mail leaves for England. Please send to Smith and Beck Opticians Cornhill for two slides of "Meteorite with fluid cavities. Fell near B??? Germany March 1879" it is a very rare object and the stock may be sold out before I return, I believe the price is 4/6 each, perhaps Thorpe's son would choose them for me. I do not think that I could possibly have got a better microscope

Your affectionate son,

**6 September {Wednesday} SS Liguria**

Lat 8.30.2 N Long 18.28.45 W

My dear Father,

I posted my last as soon as we landed at St. Vincent but do not expect that it has yet left. The entrance to the ?oadsta? is most magnificent and is evidently the crater of an extinct volcano as all the mountains are volcanic. The town itself is very wretched and the inhabitants are half breed Africans and Portuguese who simply exist by the coaling of the passing steamers, the island itself grows nothing and so all food and fruit has to be imported.

The seeds that I sent you are from the only plants on the island, and even they appear to have been imported, the smaller seeds grow in a small head like a pomegranate and the flower belongs to them. The chief amusement is to watch the diving boys diving for pence {?} the water is as clear as glass and they never miss getting anything that is thrown in to the sea, most of them are about 10 years old. There was nothing at all to be got in the shops except bad imitations of the flowers made from feathers which come from Madeira, and oranges which were not at all good.

The ship is now rather uncomfortable on account of the decks being covered with coal, as we shall not take any more before we get to Melbourne. Instead of going to Cape Town we shall run to Simons Bay to take up stores so as to run no risk of quarantine in Australia as the small pox is supposed to be very bad at Cape Town. We are now getting it very hot in the cabin as it is never under 80 and often a good deal more. However no one seems to mind it much and there is always something going on either theatricals or concerts or dancing on deck. Most of the people .... colonists returning to New Zealand or Australia.

The man whose child was hurt is going to settle in Tasmania on a fruit farm, the child will not ever I fancy get quite well and he would have a good case against the Company for damages. The Captain is a very pleasant man and is disposed to make things comfortable, he has a large place in Ireland and has not had any rent for two years. I hear that his berth here is worth about £1000 as senior captain of the fleet. Friday Very little has gone on since I wrote the above and we are having most magnificent weather, the sea as calm as a duck pond and of course every one on deck. Yesterday the first whale was seen, they do not generally come so far north but there are some round S. Helena during most seasons of the year.

The track from St. Vincent to the Cape is as near a straight line as can be and we expect to be at Simons Bay on Sunday night or Monday morning. One of the chief inconveniences in the cabins is the number of rats which infest the cabins. The ship was in dock so short a time that there was no time to catch them and they run in all directions all night The chief officer of the ship is a relation of Williams {Pa??ide} \*his brother\* {crossed out} his sister having married one of Williams sons who lives at Walton {?} I hear that the first family have fallen out with the present Mrs W and will hardly go to the house.

Your affectionate son,

*14 September {Thursday} ... had our first view of the comet ...*

**16 September {Saturday} SS Liguria**

Lat 30.4 S Long 14.19 E

My dear Mother,

Since I last wrote we have had the most lovely weather up to this morning when a tremendous swell set in and it is almost impossible to walk on the deck. The chief amusements have been theatricals which were fairly good and of which I enclose the programmes We have been getting up early every morning to see the comet which is very bright at about 5 o'clock in the morning, I suppose you have seen it a little before sunrise just over the sun. If we are fortunate we shall get to Simons Bay tomorrow evening but if the sea gets up we shall have to wait till Monday morning, our proper day for leaving is Tuesday and we shall get away as soon as possible in order to avoid any chance of small pox. There is one child on board who has been ill for some time from the heat and who does not stand much chance of getting well as it has congestion of the brain.

Sunday We have just got in to Simons Bay and will probably remain until tomorrow morning unless we get the stores on board before dark as the navigation out is difficult after sunset. No one is allowed to land and so I shall not know much about the town, but it appears to be a very small affair. We sighted land early this morning and have been coasting along all day. The scenery is very much like Cornwall but the rocks look very curious as they are in strata of red and grey. It is a most delightful change to be able to work without the continual noise of the screw and to have all quite quiet. Yesterday we got into a very heavy swell and it was impossible to walk on the deck so almost every one remained below. Tomorrow morning I shall try to catch some shark as I hear that there are plenty in the bay but I have not seen any as yet. It is now beginning to get quite cold and I expect that in about a week we shall have winter weather as we go as far as 40 S which is very much colder than the same latitude North. In case you are marking our places on the map the following are where we were each day.

3.9.82 St. Vincent  
 4.9.82 Do  
 5th 12.18 N 21.43 W  
 6th 8.30 N 18.28 W  
 7th 4.46 N 15.2 W  
 8th 1.16 N 12.18 W  
 9th 2.18 S 9.17 W  
 10th 6.14 S 6.17 W  
 11th 10.11 S 3.4 W  
 12th 14.6 S 0.4 E  
 13th 18.8 S 3.18 E  
 14th 22.7 S 6.42 E  
 15th 26.11 S 10.12 E  
 16th 30.4 S 14.19 E

The child that I mentioned as being ill at the beginning of this letter has now got alright  
 Your affectionate son,

**24 September {Sunday} SS Liguria**

Long 48.39 E

My dear Father,

I posted my last as soon as we got to Simons Bay as I did not know when the mail would leave. On account of the small pox we did not take any stores and could not land so we did not see much. Simons Bay is a small bay out of False Bay and is most beautifully situated at the foot of the mountains with high hills all round. There was very little shipping in the port the only large vessel being the flag ship of the West Coast Squadron. During the time we were there we had a most lovely view of the comet which we could see all day although it was so near to the sun and the sun very bright. On the 18th we left again and nothing much occurred until yesterday when a very heavy sea got up with a strong gale which has driven us entirely out of our course as we had to steer N to get out of it, there is still a very heavy sea running and not much indication of its going down.

1/10/82 Last Monday the sea was very high and in furling one of the sails a man got washed overboard and was of course drowned. One of the boats was got out to try to save him but could not get near and the sea was so rough that it was impossible to get the boat up again, and in consequence had to be cut adrift. It is possible that some ship from Australia to the Cape may have picked it up and reported us as lost as the name was painted on it and also on all the oars. On Friday we sighted Amsterdam Island but as it was late in the evening we could not see much of it, it appeared to be a solitary rock sticking up in the sea with St. Pauls about 50 miles to the south of it.

On Saturday we had a Christy minstrel entertainment of which I enclose the programme. If all goes well I expect we shall be in Melbourne next Sunday night or Monday morning but as we shall probably have 21 days quarantine since leaving Simons Bay we shall not be able to land till that has expired. I think I said in my last that we shall probably go to a place called Toowoomba about 80 miles to the West of Melbourne but of course we can arrange nothing till we see the local people and get their advice as to the best station. As soon as the observation is over Darwin goes to Singapore to take some observations there while Morris comes home. There are a good many New Zealanders on board and their advice is much the same as Larkworthy's about route i.e. Sydney, Auckland, Christchurch, Hokitika, Melbourne, Hobart and back to Melbourne, so a letter reaching the Bank of New Zealand, Hokitika at the end of February would be sure to find me.

Our places each day from Simons Bay have been

19th 36.15 S 21.47 E  
 20th 37.20 S 25.35 E  
 21st 37.42 S 30.24 E  
 22nd 38.12 S 37.29 E  
 23rd 37.25 S 42.48 E  
 24th 36.48 S 48.39 E  
 25th 37.41 S 55.15 E  
 26th 37.40 S 61.48 E  
 27th 37.32 S 68.36 E  
 28th 37.42 S 75.11 E  
 29th 37.57 S 81.52 E  
 30th 38.31 S 88.44 E  
 1st 39.2 S 96.6 E

I hope to be in Auckland at the beginning of January.

Your affectionate son,

*25 September {Monday} ... a man fell overboard and of course was drowned as the boat was quite unable to reach him. ...*

**9 October {Monday} SS Liguria {in another hand - "Rec'd 15/11/1882"}**

My dear Father,

We have got as far as this alright, but have had very bad weather since I last wrote This morning a case of some kind of eruption which may be small pox broke out in the steerage so we are in quarantine for the present. The man has been sent on shore and every precaution taken and for the present it is not certain that he has got it at all; as however it is very bad at the Cape the health people here are very strict. The entrance to Melbourne is rather a curious one, the ship has to pass between two headlands which are about a mile across and the bay then opens out in to an immense lagoon, the quarantine station being at one of the heads, the coast as far as we have seen it is very ugly and low lying and the harbour full of sand banks. Most of the people on the ship are going off at Melbourne as it is the chief port for Tasmania and New Zealand, some however go on to Sydney.

We have not been able to see the comet very well lately as it has been very cloudy for the last week or so, the Melbourne papers however say that it is very bright indeed. On Thursday we got in to another gale and had very bad weather indeed for a couple of days, the Captain says he hardly ever remembers such a rough voyage between here and the Cape we have had, the fiddles on the tables every day from St. Vincent up to today, now of course it is quite still. As far as we can tell we have got our instruments along quite safely and they do not appear to have suffered in the least from the rolling. A large collection of orchids was put on board at the docks and they too have stood the journey very well indeed, some of them being in flower at the present time.

If we are delayed any time in quarantine either here or in Sydney we shall have to give up going to Brisbane and put up our instruments at Sydney making the best we can of it, I don't however think that there is much fear of it. On Saturday night a presentation of £58 was made to the Captain by the passengers for the trouble he has taken in getting up amusements for the voyage, as he has nothing but his pay and Irish property it will, I expect, be rather useful to him. I enclose a programme of some theatricals we had on Friday, they were wonderfully well got up and a capital stage erected in the saloon it made a pleasant end to the journey.

Our positions each day at noon were

1/10/82 39.1 S 95.58 E  
 2/10/82 39.13 S 102.21 E  
 3/10/82 38.46 S 109.06 E  
 4/10/82 38.23 S 115.57 E  
 5/10/82 38.52 S 122.59 E  
 6th 38.51 S 129.56 E  
 7th 38.56 S 136.56 E

8th Quarantine Station Melbourne

Your affectionate son,

*11 October {Wednesday} ... Melbourne ... landed with the Captain and called on the agents who put our names down for the club where we are now stopping ..*

*12 October {Thursday} ... after breakfast walked about the town and bought a handsome knife for Coulan and another for Perry ...*

*13 October ... got up at 2.45 am and went up to the {Melbourne} observatory where I had arranged to meet Mr Turner ... train to Albury ... rate of wages is very high here, railway navvies get 6/- - 7/- a day, cooks want £45 per annum, housemaids £30 to £35 ... there is a poll tax on Chinamen coming in to the country of £10/0/0 ...*

### **13 October {Friday} Melbourne**

My dear Rector,

I have got as far as this on the journey all right and have had a most lovely voyage The first place that we touched at was S. Vincent which is merely a coaling station in among the most arid mountains that it is possible to imagine, we then came on to Simons Bay not touching at Cape Town as the Captain was afraid of getting small pox on board. After leaving there we got in to a tremendous cyclone and had to go due north to get out of it, the ship could make no way against it.

When the worst of it was over a man got swept overboard, a boat tried to save him but could not get near and as the sea was too rough to get it up again it had to be cut adrift, if it was picked up by a ship bound for Cape Town it is very likely that we have been reported as lost, a ship from India met with the same storm and had everything on her decks washed away, including all her boats. Just before we got to Melbourne one of the steerage passengers was found to have a rash on him which was mistaken for small pox and so we had to go to the quarantine station, after 48 hours it was found to be a false alarm and so we got ?atigue? at 10p.m. on the 10th.

Our names had been put down at the club and we are stopping here, it is a most comfortable arrangement combining a club and hotel. I am a good deal disappointed with the town, it is a great straggling place which would make a fine town if condensed into about a quarter of the space. A good deal of the country round is like the Essex marshes combined with the sand of Ostend so you can imagine what it is like. Since we have been here we have spent a good deal of time at the Observatory as it is one of the finest in the world. I don't know what the comet looks like in England, here it is a most magnificent sight but 3 a.m. is not a convenient time to look at it, this morning I was at the observatory at that hour. It is the most difficult town in the world to find ones way about, all the streets are at right angles to each other and no names posted to any of them. We leave here tomorrow morning for Sydney and then get a steamer on to Brisbane where our station for the transit will be. I find the man I have with me a most useful fellow and if he is disengaged when I get back I shall begin to build a telescope.

After a little practice it does not appear to be very difficult and will afford a good deal of amusement if I am not cured before. I know you yearn for a long sea voyage so you had better pack up and join me in New Zealand or Tasmania. Both Darwin and Morris are very pleasant fellows, but Mrs. D, Miss Morris and her friend are rather a nuisance.

Your affectionate nephew,

**16 October {Monday} Petty's Hotel, Sydney**

My dear Father,

We arrived at Melbourne on the 10th and found that rooms had been taken for us at the club so we are very comfortable, in all the large towns the clubs have a large number of bedrooms and visitors can generally get introduced and stop at them. The town is laid out in square blocks with very wide streets, the houses however as yet are very poor except some of the banks and public buildings. We spent most of our time at the observatory as we had a good deal to arrange with the astronomer there and we also wanted to get any experience he might have gained in the last transit, his name is Ellery and was born at Cranleigh.

The country around Melbourne appears to be very flat and has a most poverty struck appearance as all the roofs of the smaller houses are made of corrugated iron and in many places everything is built of it, it is also used a good deal for fencing. The botanical gardens are very good indeed but we did not have much time to see them, I shall go through them again when I return. As we thought that there might be some risk of quarantine we arranged to go by train and so were able to see the country. It has a very desolate appearance as the gum trees are peeled for their bark and instead of being cut down are left to wither where they stand, the result being that half the forests consist of dead trees, the colour of the leaves too is very dark and in the distance the scenery very much resembles the olive woods that we saw in the spring.

On our way we passed the place where Kelly the outlaw was shot, the whole country goes by the name of Kelly's Country. On Saturday night we slept at Albury which is the frontier town of New South Wales, the rail from Melbourne runs as far as the Murray river, we then had to drive in a coach to Albury where the rail begins again, it is a nice clean looking town surrounded by hills and must be very hot in Summer. When I was in Melbourne I had to go to the bank of New Zealand and the Manager told me that the Commercial Union had a first rate agent there, they have very good premises both here and there, and their notices are posted all over the place. The Oriental bank has I hear a very second rate manager and the business is going down in Melbourne.

We are having it very hot indeed but it is not nearly so oppressive as in England as the air is very dry. The Australian wines are very good of the Sauterne and Claret types, would you like to have a few dozen as samples I can get them when I return to Melbourne. I expect that we shall leave for Brisbane on Saturday next if we can get all our work done with the observatory here. From all I hear I shall not be able to see Tasmania and New Zealand well before the end of April and so propose to catch the last steamer in April or the first in May from Adelaide, the Orient comes home by the Canal.

The child of the people from Highweek that I told you got hurt on board is, I fancy, nearly all right again, they are going on to Tasmania to settle. The town of Sydney is very much like an English market town and the streets are not arranged in the same straight way as in Melbourne, there is a regular Chinese quarter near the docks and it looks very curious to see all the names written up in Chinese, there is great agitation going on against them and they all have to pay a poll tax of £10/0/0 on arriving in the colony. Labour too is very expensive, navvies on the railway get 7/0 a day. and good carpenters, plasterers etc are paid 18/0 a day. Servants appear to be about the same, cooks get £45 and so on.

I expect that we shall leave for Brisbane on Saturday by the steamer and shall get there in about 48 hours, if we are fortunate we shall have all our instruments set up by the 1st November. The hotels out here have the most primitive ideas as to furniture, I am writing this lying on the bed  
Your affectionate son,

*18 October {Wednesday} ... Darwin arrived over land ...*

*19 October ... In the morning called on the Coopers ...*

*21 October {Saturday} ... Left Petty's hotel for the trip which we had arranged into the Blue mountains ... the rail runs through large forests of Eucalyptus ...*

**22 October {Sunday} Imperial Hotel, Mount Victoria, Sydney NSW**

My dear Father,

We have been very busy all the week looking after our things and making arrangements with the astronomer here for the transit. All the instruments have, as far as we can see, come out safely, and I do not think that more care could have been taken in trans-shipping them. We go on to Melbourne on Tuesday by the boat and expect that we shall have everything in working order by the end of the first week in November. Sydney appears to be a very pleasant town and is not cut up into blocks like Melbourne.

During the last few years a great many stone buildings have been put up for Government offices and the town will apparently be almost rebuilt in the next ten years or so. The botanical gardens are very good indeed but just now do not look their best as it has been a very dry season and the shrubs are very much in want of water. I expect to get a good many seeds from the director. The ground around the gardens looks very desolate just now as the exhibition building has been totally destroyed by fire and only the ruins remain, it was built entirely of wood and was totally burnt down in about 30 minutes. In addition to all the collections which were destroyed most of the public papers were lost, as they were simply stored in the wooden building without being put into safes, the map of the colony alone will take 4 years to reproduce as all the proofs etc were burnt. Having finished most that we had to do we arranged to come out here with Russell the Astronomer Royal from Saturday to Monday.

The railway for about an hour and a half passes through the usual gum trees and the country is very ugly indeed, it then begins to rise and for the next 30 miles is probably the most wonderful line in the world. The gradients are in many places as sharp as 1 in 30 and as it is even then impossible to rise fast enough zig-zags are cut, the train alternately being pulled and pushed till it gets to an elevation of about 3,000 feet above sea level. We stopped at the Mount Victoria station and have got very good quarters, the scenery all round is of the most magnificent description, as the Blue mountains for many years cut off all intercourse with the interior; for hundreds of miles a range of perpendicular sandstone hills extends parallel to the sea and it is only within the last 50 years or so that any way has been found to get over them; the scenery is somewhat like the Downlands landslip if you can imagine the top to be about 2,000 feet from the bottom and full of enormous gum trees, this morning we walked down the first track that was made and went down about 700 feet, the ferns grow in the greatest luxuriance, many having fronds 8 ft long, the gum trees too are often 200 ft high and the air full of the scent of their leaves.

Unfortunately there is a hazy mist hanging over the hills and so we are unable to see the views which are superb; tomorrow we shall go by rail towards Bathurst for about 25 miles and so see the zig-zag down, which is if possible finer than the one we have seen, and then get back to Sydney in the evening. The astronomer has been most kind in arranging everything for us and coming with us himself.

On Friday we went with the head of the Board of Pilots all over the harbour in his steam launch, the scenery is splendid with vegetation coming right down to the waters' edge, the harbour ?..? consists of a large number of long creeks up any of which ships can lie in perfect safety and hundreds of vessels might be hidden in them, as in many cases they extend ten miles from the main channel; the entrance to the harbour is somewhat like Melbourne but the heads are much bolder. We were told that the coast line from the North head to the S extended 112 miles so you can imagine how large it is as none of the creeks is very wide.

Since I have been here I have been a great deal with Russell getting hints as to making telescopes as he is a first rate mechanic, and shall try my hand when I get home. It does not seem to be very difficult if one has plenty of patience and the appliances which can be easily got or made. We have not yet made up our minds as to where we shall go at Brisbane, but it will probably be about 20 miles out of the town. Any astronomer out here will have a good chance of buying first rate instruments after the transit as two of the instruments are to be sold with a reserve price of £220 cost price having been £315, but I do not imagine that there are many people who would care about them, I am convinced that mine is as good or better than either of them. Both Grover and myself have made a good many drawings of the comet which correspond exactly with those made at the Melbourne observatory, he is a capital draughtsman and has had great experience in the work.

Since we have been in Sydney he has been living on board but has now had to move to a Temperance Hotel as the ship has left dock. When we were in Melbourne harbour we very nearly got an immense shark, we had hooked it and got it quite out of the water when the rope which was 1/2 in thick broke with the strain and he managed to get away, he was about 14 ft long and had been attacked before as there was a big harpoon mark in his side which had not healed up. I was at the Commercial Union office in Sydney arranging about insuring the things home again and the manager told me that he had the largest fire and marine business in the town.

Your affectionate son,

*24 October ... Katoomba for Sydney ...*

*26 October {Thursday} ... arrived Brisbane ...*

**29 October {Sunday} Queensland Club, Brisbane**

My dear Father,

We arrived here on Friday from Sydney in one of the ASN boats and had a very good passage indeed, the sea was as smooth as a pond and we coasted along the land the whole way. We found that our names had been put down at the club and so I am sleeping here, the others have gone in to a lodging house which is not nearly so comfortable. Everyone is disposed to do all they can for us and on arrival we received a most civil letter from the governor asking us to stop with him at his country house at Toowoomba as long as it suited our convenience.

We have been making a great many enquiries as to the best place for putting up the observatory, and all seems to point to a place in the Darling Downs called Jimbour which belonged to a company of which the late Sir James Bell was the chief, the house is the largest in the colony out of Brisbane and has been empty for the last four months, the ?..? astronomical factors are not so good as nearer Brisbane as the sun will not be quite so high up when the transit takes place but on the other hand the chances of a fine morning are infinitely greater, as there is often, we are told, a thick haze over Brisbane which would be utterly fatal, the town of Brisbane is of course very new but like all the other towns that I have seen about has been laid out with wide streets in view of future houses. The parliament houses are fine buildings and so also is the governor's, but with those exceptions there is not much worth noticing.

The Prime Minister McIlwraith is doing all he can for us, and has given us all free rail and telegraph passes, as long as we are here. This morning we went to breakfast with him, he has a nice house about two miles out of the town, all the houses are of wood mostly supported on piles, and covered with galvanised iron, they are ugly to look at but most comfortable (for a hot climate) inside. All round the house there is a broad veranda about 12 ft wide which keeps the house cool in the hottest weather, and of course is most pleasant to sit under, except when the mosquitos come in thousands as they often do.

After breakfast he proposed a walk to the top of One Tree Hill, to which we all agreed although we knew that it would be very hot indeed. However we arranged ourselves for the occasion, the Premier without coat or waistcoat, and an old hat on, and set out. The hill is only about 600 feet high and it would not have been much of a walk if it had not been so close. However we got to the top and had a most lovely view for our pains as the summit has been cleared so that we could see all round. By the time that we got back it was time for dinner so we dined with McIlwraith and then came in by train.

Yesterday we went to the Acclimatisation Society's gardens, they have a wonderful collection of things from Java Sumatra etc, and I hope to get some good seeds, I became a subscriber in order to get what I wanted, the curator tells me that there is no difficulty in sending things home in Wardian cases and so I think that I shall try a small one so as to gain experience in the mode of packing in case I want to do anything of the kind in the future. The most lovely thing that they have got in the gardens is the Jaccaranda from Madagascar the whole tree is one mass of blue flowers without a single leaf and is about 15 ft high; the only thing that could look the least like it is an enormous mass of wisteria but the colour of the latter is not so beautiful.

There were also a fair number of orchids but they do not give much attention to them; the best thing that they have now in flower is the vanda teres {?} which is very lovely. There is also a very large collection of ferns many of which are from the South Sea Islands and as yet are un-named, it is some of these that I will try to send home. Tomorrow at 6.30 we go by special train to Jimbour and stop for two hours at Toowoomba to call on the Governor who has his country house there; if we are fortunate and agree on a site I hope we shall have most of our instruments in position by the end of the week, which is the date that I had always expected to be ready on. The chief thing that may do us harm is the hail which once or twice every summer comes down in blocks large enough to perforate the galvanised iron roofs, there was such a storm about 10 days ago and did a great deal of damage but as it was wanted all over the country the people did not grumble much.

Although the days are so hot they are not nearly so oppressive as hot days in England and we have had nothing to compare with the heat in Spain in the spring. When I arrived I found 2 S. James Budgets and a letter from my mother; things in Egypt seem to have settled down pretty much.

Your affectionate son,

*30 October {Monday} ... Darwin and Morris went by 6.30 (special) to Jimbour to look at the site for the observatory ...*

*31 October ... Received a telegram from Morris to say that he had fixed on Jimbour ... everything was most convenient except that we should have to take our own servants ...*

*1 November {Wednesday} ... Darwin has set about getting the servants but it is rather doubtful whether we shall get what we want i.e. a cook and 2 housemaids ...*

*2 November ... going up the incline towards Toowoomba Morris and self rode on the cow catcher ... Macalister ... 4 trains of 12 horses ... Grover and Bayley stopped behind ...*

*4 November {Saturday} ... Spent all day unloading and getting the situation of the huts fixed ...*

*5 November ... Sir Arthur Palmer left at 10 a.m. good riddance! Gave an address, Auckland beginning of January, Hokitika end of February (bank of NZ), Melbourne (P.O.) beginning of April, leave Adelaide by first Orient boat in May. ...*

### **5 November {Sunday} Jimbour, Queensland**

My dear Father,

We have been all the week making our arrangements for coming here and arrived \*Thursday\* {crossed out} Friday last. The house and estate used to belong to Sir J.P. Bell who was for many years one of the leading men of the colony and acting governor He died a short time ago and now the house is empty. It is situated about 180 miles due west from Brisbane a little to the North of the railway; most of the way up in the train the views are splendid, over vast undulating forests of blue gum trees; it is the custom here to ride on the front of the engine and so we got a capital idea of the country.

The Darling Downs begin near Toowoomba and there the land is flat but magnificent sheep pasture. When we got to Macalister which is the railway station we saw 4 teams of 12 horses each waiting to take our things about 12 miles over the plain to the house. We arranged to come in a four horse buggy while Grover and the gunner remained behind to look after the loading of the wagons. We could see the house in the distance in the middle of a huge mirage which looked exactly like a lake. We got to Jimbour after about 2 1/2 hours driving over the roughest possible track and were almost shaken to pieces. The estate is one of the largest in the colony consisting of 142,000 acres in one block besides other large farms or stations as they are called here, the whole now belongs to a Company called the Darling Downs estate company of which Sir Arthur Palmer is manager and McIlwraith the Premier chairman. Since Bell's death the station has been reduced by selectors taking some of the Crown lands but when it was in full swing over 200,000 sheep used to be shorn each year, this year there will only be about 100,000 clipped.

Horse breeding too is conducted on a large scale as there are about 700 on the estate. The station itself is quite a little village with store, work shops, a coal mine, post and telegraph office and church. The coal seam is about 60 feet from the surface and runs under the whole estate, in one place being as much as 30 feet thick ?? is made on the ground. On Friday Sir Arthur Palmer with Kimber and his son came up and stopped till Sunday, I don't think very much of any of the trio and we were all very glad when we saw the last of them. The house is the largest in Queensland and of course we find it very comfortable as it has only been empty for a very short time. On the ground floor there is, hall, billiard room, dining room, morning room, and two drawing rooms, all the rooms being about the size of the Rousdon dining room, the bed rooms being in proportion. We have fixed on a very good site for the observatory and as far as we can judge the mornings seem to be very fine indeed. I am making a collection of all the things I can from the blacks as they appear to have a good many different kinds of weapons.

I am also getting a complete set of eggs and snakes. The first crawling creature that we found was a centipede about 5 inches long which was said to be very poisonous and there appear to be a great many dangerous snakes about. When one goes about 3 miles from the house into the scrub there are no end of kangaroos and some emus, but of course we have not seen them yet. We do not feel the heat nearly so much as we expected although the thermometer in the sun was yesterday 147; the air is very dry and there is generally a nice breeze blowing.

The colony seems able to produce almost everything possible and the gold mines are quite as rich as Ballarat {?} After I leave here I shall go up to Rockhampton to see the ??mpic fields. In one part a large deposit of opals has been discovered but they have not as yet got any good coloured ones although pieces have been found as big as hen's eggs The chief produce in the North is sugar which pays very well if labour enough can be got, the South Sea islanders are imported to a large extent but the settlers object to it and make up all kinds of absurd stories about the way they are treated in order to prevent their being imported by the government.

There are also a good many Chinese in the colony but a poll tax has lately been put on them of £10 each and so the supply has diminished. Yesterday I went out for a walk and saw no end of different birds, some of the parrots are very beautiful, their only fault being the horrible noises that they make, there are also a great many opossums and little sloth bears, the latter do a great deal of damage to the gardens if they come in any numbers.

The comet is still quite visible at about two in the morning and as large as ever, it is now however a comparatively faint object as it is going away from the sun rapidly. It is just possible that it may come back again in about 3 months and in that case would probably fall into the sun. When it was nearest to it this time it was only 23,000 miles away. As far as we have gone with the unpacking I do not think that a single thing has been broken, Grover packed mine so that they have hardly had a shake.

Your affectionate son,

*6 November ... Miss Morris, Miss Porter arrived ...*

*7 November Observations ... Saturn ... Nebula ... 32 Orionis - Grover divided this double with power 310 but could not do so myself ...*

### **12 November {Sunday} Jimbour, Queensland**

My dear Mother

We have now settled down to our usual routine and have found that everything has arrived without the slightest damage. The weather is simply magnificent and every night is as clear as possible so that we can star gaze to our hearts content. The observatory of course is the centre of a good deal of interest, and everyone on the station has been up to see it. There is very little to be seen in the country round as one can walk for miles, either across the plain or in to the gum tree scrub, without seeing anything new, the gum trees are very ugly about here and do not give the least shade, they only look well when in great forests such as we saw on the way up. The sheep shearing will begin soon, the sheds are about 12 miles from here and there will not be so many shorn this year as the stock has been reduced to half, the number now on the station is about 90,000.

The prize sheep fetch very large prices £1400 having been refused for one ram by this company, this is however the largest price ever offered for a single animal. The weather does not feel nearly so hot here as at home although it is often 145 in the sun, the shade temperature however has not as yet gone over 85. The whole of the water for the station is pumped up by one small windmill into a tank, the engine works to 12 horse power and would, I fancy, be the very thing for the Rousdon parsonage as it requires very little wind to drive it and is not deranged by the tropical hurricanes which pass by here. The price is about £75 to £90 and the freight home would be very trifling. The water is thrown up about 300 ft I could get one made by the people who ?..? all for the station if it is worth while, as several improvements have been made since the originals arrived.

I do not expect that I shall have much time for the microscope as almost all the day is taken up by working out the results of the observations taken overnight. As soon as the transit is over I promised Hardman to send an article for the "Post" so you will see an account of it there I find Grover a most invaluable man, he seems able to turn his hand to anything, and does not mind what he does to assist. We had a good deal of difficulty in getting servants but have now got 3 fairly good ones, none seemed to care to come for so short a time and it is certainly not very comfortable for them as the house is entirely unfurnished as far as ordinary necessaries are concerned and the cook has absolutely nothing but beef to operate on; it seems rather odd with 90,000 sheep on the station not to be able to get mutton, and butter is 2/0 a pound.

Your affectionate son,

13 November {Monday} ... Hokitika end of \*March\* {crossed out} May and leave for home about July 1st.

...

### **19 November {Sunday} Jimbour, Queensland**

My dear Father,

Your letter, my Mother's, "the Times", St. James Budget and Surrey Comet arrived on Friday by the "Brind???" mail; the bill from Prior is I fancy a mistake as I paid some amount of the kind by cheque about 6 months ago which Searle {?} said he had omitted to charge in one of my accounts. There is very little going on here now as we have quite settled down into regular work. Our usual routine is breakfast 9 o'clock, 10 - 1 working out the nights' observations, lunch at 1, then a walk or drive, dinner at 6 and then observing either from 8 - 12 or from 12 - 4. I usually do the latter, the others the former. The weather in the sun is very hot never less than 145 but I do not feel it in the least as the shade seldom goes above 70 - 80 and the air is very dry indeed. On Friday I drove with the manager to the sheds to see the sheep shearing, it is a tremendous undertaking as 97,000 have to be shorn and it is very difficult to get shearers.

Everything is done on an enormous scale the apparatus for washing them alone cost £5,000 the water is pumped by a steam engine into a high tank from which it falls like a shower bath on to the sheep which are held under it and most effectually drives out every atom of dirt. The wool when clipped is first divided into long and short staple {?} and then each into four classes, the best being AA and then 1, 2, 3, the trimmings are then put into a class by themselves. I hope to be able to get a nice collection of seeds, the manager is going to give me some seed of a plant that grows like a sugar cane and is first rate food for cattle, he thinks it will do in Devonshire.

I forgot to tell you in my last the shape of the windmill pumps that I mentioned, they consist of a round wheel standing on 3 posts, the wheel of the large one that supplies the station is 22 ft across and throws 1050 gallons an hour at 30 revolutions per minute to a height of 400 ft., they are American in design but have had many improvements made since they have been here, they are not unsightly and would, I believe, be the very thing for the parsonage. The manager here would have one made under his own eye if you care to have one. I enclose some of the seeds that I have got as they may be too late for planting when I get home. From all I hear this colony seems to be able to produce anything both vegetable and mineral, the Duke of Manchester has laid out a good deal of money in different stations, he has £20,000 in this company and owns a lot of land at Port Darwin which, when the trans-continental railway is made, will be a most important place. Both tea and coffee have been grown and I am trying to get samples.

Your affectionate son,

### **26 November {Sunday} Jimbour, Queensland**

My dear Father,

Many thanks for the spectroscope of which I received the invoice with your letter yesterday, it will be of great use to me as in this clear air much more can be seen in the sky than is ever possible in England.

I am very glad you told Larkworthy that I could do nothing much in his scheme, as I should probably only make a mess of it; with the exception of the printed paper, I of course know very little about it. There can be no doubt, I fancy, that well selected land in a new colony is a most paying concern and at any rate here there seems to be enough to satisfy everyone. The main thing appears to get a good selection and then leave it alone for some years. The blacks here seem to be a very degraded race and are fast dying out, they appear to do nothing but gamble and drink when they have the chance, living on opossums and lizards, for tents they merely take the bark from a gum tree and put it up to windward, and when they leave the camp throw it down and leave it till they, or some others come back again.

The other day I went out walabi {sic} and kangaroo shooting, the former are a small kind of kangaroo; we had very good sport though it is not easy to get near them. By the Marsupial Act the colony pays 8d for every kangaroo scalp and 4d for every walabi scalp brought in, in addition to which the station pays 4d and 2d respectively making it up to 1/- and 6d; on an average day a man can earn 20/0 which makes it well worth while hunting them A kangaroo is considered to eat as much grass as 2 1/2 sheep.

I am getting a good collection of all kinds of things and shall send what I have already got home with the instruments, I am not far enough in the interior to get many black weapons. There are a good many snakes about all round the station; yesterday we killed a brown one about 5 ft long, it was under a piece of bark which the blacks had used for huts. I am also making a collection of all the beetles that I can find, as I think it is quite possible that there may be some new varieties, it is hardly likely that the whole country has been explored by naturalists.

The fruit season is just beginning and there appears to be the promise of a magnificent crop, apricots peaches and grapes are the chief things cultivated. With regard to the famine in Iceland, when I left, hay was for the first time in the history of the island being imported and I should never believe much that that {sic} Lock said. With regard to the time that I am in New Zealand I must be guided by circumstances but a letter reaching Hokitika (bank of NZ) at the end of March would at any rate be forwarded to me.

Your affectionate son,

*8 December {Friday} ... Transit was a total failure ...*

### **10 December {Sunday} Jimbour, Queensland**

My dear Father,

You will have heard from my telegram long ago that the transit was a total failure owing to clouds, we could not see the slightest trace of the sun during the whole time, but in this respect were not alone, as you will see by the paper I have sent by this mail. In Australia and New Zealand it was cloudy at 8 stations and fine at 5. It was all the more annoying as the five previous mornings were most brilliant and also the three subsequent ones. We are all very busy now packing up, Morris leaves on Wednesday to catch the Orient steamer while Darwin and myself remain to make a trip to the Bunya Mountains which are about 25 miles away and consist of nothing but araucarias.

I am told that there are some very fine woods to be got in the mountains which hardly anyone knows anything about, I am going to see a timber merchant who has lived in the hills all his life and shall probably send home some specimens large enough to make furniture of, if they come up to the description, and the freight is not too high. Many thanks for the spectroscope, pudding, and letters which arrived quite safely, the one from Larkworthy is dated 3 days after yours and so, I imagine, is a revised version of the first. He seems chiefly to want me to try and persuade any native that I may meet, that the company is not a gang of swindlers. I have not however had time to read the whole of it yet. With regard to the chocolate that Lamer {?} gave me to bring out the flat slabs of paste got mouldy on the outside and did not look very nice, the creams in the box you sent were quite mouldy and spoiled.

I fancy that glycerine would be a good thing to make the paste with, it is an antiseptic, perfectly wholesome and sweet to the taste. I have returned some of the chocolate by Grover so that you may see it. If you like to try the experiment according to present arrangements a parcel reaching Gibbs Bright & Co Melbourne by July 1st would find me. I told you in my last that I should send Grover home by the British India line on January 2nd which is due in London February 19th. All the cases will be marked in red {two letters B back to back} and it might be as well if one of Mr. Graham's {?} men were there to look after the unloading with Grover as I do not want them knocked about in landing.

As I said in my last I hope you will find something for Grover to do. If I stop in New Zealand the extra 3 months you suggest, a letter to Hokitika arriving at the end of May would find me (Bank of NZ). From all I can gather of Larkworthy's letter it seems to be a splendid chance of seeing the country which it would be a pity to miss. I have sent home a bottle of seed called imphee {?} which requires to be grown in a warm situation, and makes first rate food for cattle, the directions are in the bottle. With best love I remain  
Your affectionate son,

**18 December {Monday} Jimbour, Queensland**

My dear Mother,

We are now in the middle of packing up and hope if the weather keeps fine to leave by the middle of the week. Last Friday Darwin and myself made a trip to the Bunya Mountains which are about 30 miles away. On Thursday we sent two pack horses on with a tent and provisions, and started ourselves about 6.00 on Friday, the road for the first 25 miles was very bad and a good deal of it through uncleared paddocks but the last 5 were very rough, we had to climb about 800 feet almost on our hands and knees.

The Bunya range divides the tropical from the non tropical vegetation and as soon as we got to the top of the range we came among palms and other tropical plants, from the top the view is most extensive and lovely, on a clear day one can see almost 50 miles in every direction. The bunyas (araucarias) grow to an immense size, one that we measured was 19 ft round the butt at 4 ft from the ground, and about 150 ft high. The fruit ripens once in 3 years, and all the blacks in the country collect to eat them, they are treated like a chestnut, either boiled or baked, they will be ripe in about 2 months and I have left word to have some sent home as I have never seen them in England. On the way up we saw the first native dog, they do a great deal of harm among the sheep and 2/6 is paid for every tail brought in. In the forest we came across a good many parrots and cockatoos but did not skin any on account of the difficulty of preserving them from weevil and white ant. Some of the pigeons are very beautiful, the wonga is considered the best for food and we managed to get several of them.

We also noticed a good many bronze winged pigeons but could not get any as they are very shy indeed. On our way down we saw a large number of kangaroos and the first wild emus. The emus were very tame but are rapidly becoming extinct in this part of the country as they are shot for their skins and oil, the latter is supposed to be a perfect cure for rheumatism etc. One of the most curious trees in the forest is the poison tree, it grows about 150 ft high and often 20 ft round the butt, the leaves are like a mulberry and sting like a nettle but the effects remain for a much longer time, and are often very unpleasant. I am sending home some native weapons by Grover and hope that they will arrive alright, there will also be a bottle of snakes and a lot of beetles, it is possible that there may be some new varieties among them, I shall take them to the museum on my return.

As soon as I have arranged about sending the goods off I shall go to Townsville and then by rail up to Charters Towers to see the gold mining, I expect to get to Auckland about the middle of January. As I said in my last I shall be at Hokitika (bank of NZ) about the end of May.

Your affectionate son,

*20 December {Wednesday} ... Left Jimbour with all our goods ... self to the Royal and Grover went on with the baggage to Brisbane ...*

**24 December {Sunday} Queensland Club, Brisbane**

My dear Father,

I arrived here from Jimbour on Friday last. After a good deal of trouble we got all the instruments packed and transported to Macalister Station on Wednesday.

The road is about 12 miles from Jimbour to Macalister over a flat plain which in wet weather is quite impassable for heavy goods, and so we had to wait some time for a fine day; however they got over without any damage and were put on two trucks As they could not come by the same train as ourselves, we stopped at Toowoomba for a couple of nights in order to see the place.

It is a pleasant town 6 hours by rail from Brisbane in the centre of a large pastoral district and is a great squatting {?} centre. Some of the best wine in Queensland is grown there and I am sending home two kinds, one red the other white, the red is 10 months old and cost 30/- a doz it is a fair sample of the wine of the district, the white is not so good and I am a little doubtful about it standing the voyage, its price is 20/- a doz.

As it is quite a new industry the vineyards are very small indeed, and each grower only makes a few casks, none being exported for trade. I also went to see a nurseryman named Hartsmann who sends plants to Kew, and ordered a Wardian Case from him to cost £6/-/- together with 30/- of various kinds of seeds He tells me that several of the things are new to England so I hope they will arrive safely. I shall give Grover the written instructions from him as to how they are to be treated on the voyage.

Toowoomba is a favourite place for Brisbane people to stop at during the summer when it is very hot along the coast. The governor, Sir Arthur Kennedy, has his country seat there. The evening that I arrived a tremendous thunder storm broke just over the town and the rain came down in sheets, harder than I have ever seen it in England, and the streets were soon turned into rivers However it soon cleared off and the night was lovely. Next day (Friday) I came on here by the 6.30 a.m. train which got in at 1.30; on the way we passed through another tremendous storm and on arriving in Brisbane found it very hot and damp All the people are grumbling about the great heat (about 80 - 85 in the shade) but I do not feel it in the least as one wears exactly what one likes.

Christmas appears to be kept here much in the same way as at home but it seems odd to have it in the middle of summer. I have arranged to send Grover home by the British India boat (Merkara) which is due in London on February 28th. He will call at Eastcheap on his way from the docks. As I said in a former letter it would be as well if Mr. Graham's {?} agent met him so as to help to see the goods through customs, there will be nothing liable to duty except the 5 doz wines. It will not, I fancy, come under the claret rate as the red tastes very strong but of course I do not know for certain. I shall go as far as Townsville in the same boat on my way to Charter's Towers gold mines, I have a letter from the Premier to the Warden and so shall see all that is worth seeing there.

I shall then take a boat to Sydney and it will then depend on the steamers whether I go up the Blue Mountains to see the Fish river caves or not, I should like to see them but would not miss the chance of a good boat to New Zealand in order to do so. As far as one can judge from photos they must be very wonderful. The Acclimatisation gardens here are the best in Australia and I have joined the society in order to be able to get some plants sent home.

There are many un-named varieties from the North which have never been sent out and I have been promised a good collection at the proper season which is about March, the price packed in 2 Wardian cases is £8/10. The managers name is Keffert {?} he was in Veitch's about 8 years ago so Ollerhead will probably know him. I have read Larkworthy's letter carefully through and shall be chiefly guided by the advice of Murdoch the general manager of the bank in Auckland as to my route Kimber the solicitor is here and has arranged for the construction of a transcontinental railway to go to the North.

I should fancy that any land along the line would rapidly rise in value, but there are great difficulties in the way of non resident owners except as shareholders in land companies. A man named Jessel a nephew of the Master of the Rolls has just arrived here having come to grief in England.

I knew a little of him at Cambridge and don't want to see him any more. It is the greatest mistake in the world to send any one out here with an allowance, the only chance of making a ?..? ight do anything is to let him have about £2/- in his pocket when he lands, unless it is possible to send him to an up country station at once, the remittance men as they are called are the bane of the colony as they never leave the town and are always hanging on for the next grantees' allowances Frank Gunney {?} one of the banker's relations who used to be a lieutenant in the navy has just been admitted to the asylum for people who can work no more. He was for many years a shepherd on Jimbour but when he had earned about £20 would go to Dalby or some other town and finish it in drink.

Two cousins (Ellis) of the Duke of Portland are here about as poor as they can be. Your letters of Oct 18 & 27 only got here on December 21st, as also Cole's of the 19th so I could not telegraph according to his code. The papers have arrived in proper order. Please send the third account of Rousdon in the "Comet", I received the other two  
Your affectionate son,

*29 December {Friday} ... Left Toowoomba last Friday and came on to the Queensland club ... only other member being the Captain (Wood) of the British India boat "Merkara" by which I have taken a passage home for Grover and as far as Townsville for myself. ...*

### **31 December {Sunday} Queensland Club, Brisbane**

My dear Father,

Since I last wrote there has been very little going on as the Christmas holidays are in full swing and in consequence have had a good deal of trouble in arranging about my goods. I have insured them through to London for £300 at the Commercial Union and will forward the policy by Grover. Last Thursday I went to the government prison at St. Helena and also the asylum for old people at Dunwick {?}, they are both on islands in the bay. The former has about 120 inmates who all appear to be very well treated, after the first three months they have meat twice a day and tobacco, the cells are large enough to hold 8 or ten prisoners and they are allowed to do much as they like all night.

They are chiefly employed in sugar making, saddlery and boot making and the whole of the government work in these departments is done here, the total value of the work last year was over £5,000. After 6 months training a man can turn out a saddle worth £4/10/0 in 4 days and many of them can do work worth £5 a week. The island itself lies very low and in summer there are myriads of mosquitoes on it. The asylum for old people is on another island, as soon as anyone is past work they apply for admission and remain there for the rest of their lives, having as much as they want to eat and drink. If at any time they care to come out for a time they can do so, and then go back again whenever they like, they live in large wards, each containing about 30 beds and each ward is a separate house, the whole place appears to be thoroughly clean and comfortable.

The weather at Christmas was most miserable, cold and wet every day, this of course made everyone very wretched as we had been having a spell of beautiful weather before, and it is now most lovely, though the thermometer in the shade is 85. This afternoon I am going to see the Premier Sir Thomas McIlwraith KCMG and shall dine with him, the two great questions in the colony at present are whether South Sea and Chinese labour is to be introduced in order to work the sugar industry; and the trans continental railway. With regard to the former the plain question is whether the colony is to be worked by colonial labour or not at all as field labour in the north is quite out of the question for white people Kimber as solicitor for a London Syndicate is the prime mover in the railway scheme which creates a great amount of opposition on account of the land question involved I send you by this mail a paper containing a copy of the argument. The divisions in parliament on both will be very close and the govt. will probably be beaten.

The Christmas pudding turned out very good and was partaken of at the club dinner on Monday. I am sending by Grover a few berries of coffee grown in Queensland last year.

Your affectionate son,

**1883**

**3 January {Wednesday} Brisbane {in another hand, "Brought by Grover 5th March 1883"}**

My dear Father,

I enclose the bill of lading and policy for my telescope etc. Grover has the duplicate and I have the third. I am leaving today by the Merkara with Darwin and Grover. The former stops at Singapore to do some work there before going on to England, Grover of course goes through and will give you this. I am sending a lot of seeds home by this mail and also one of the fruit of the Bunya (*aruacaria Bidwelli*) it is a very favourite fruit with the blacks who assemble from all the country round to eat them.

You will find the fruit in the cone like fir nuts and they must be boiled or roasted like chestnuts. Two Wardian cases of plants will be sent from here at the proper time, the price will be about £10 which is to be sent to on their arrival to "The Secretary, Acclimatisation Society, Brisbane" among all the things I have sent home there ought to be something good. We are now having most miserable weather, heavy rain all day. I hope it will not be so next week as I am going to ride from Charter's Towers to Bowen in order to get a good idea of the sugar industry.

I hope to get to New Zealand by the first of February. I have found Grover throughout the trip to be most useful and obliging, if you take him on on his return you would find him *\*most useful\** {crossed out} very handy in packing curios to send to Rousdon, but he does not care what he turns his hand to. When I get back I want to learn from him how to build a telescope. In great haste.

Your affectionate son,

*6 January {Saturday} ... have at last managed to get all our baggage together and start in the "Merkara" for Townsville ...*

**6 January {Saturday} British India RMS Merkara, Keppel Bay**

My dear Father,

We have at last managed to get all our goods shipped and left Brisbane last Thursday Darwin goes to Singapore and myself to Townsville in order to run up to the Charters Towers gold fields which are among the richest in Australia. From there I go on the 1st by the boat to Sydney and then cross to Auckland by one of the Pacific Mail boats. There has been very little going on since my last, but the weather has improved a good deal. We are now at anchor about 40 miles from Rockhampton, in the bay. On Friday we went up in the steam launch to Rockhampton, the river is very uninteresting the banks being very low and only covered with mangrove swamps.

The town is laid out in the usual way with wide straight streets and most of the houses are built of corrugated iron. On Saturday morning we took a drive for a couple of hours and saw the botanical gardens which contain the usual tropical plants growing in great luxuriance as the climate here is very different to Brisbane although it is so near to it.

There is a very fine purple water lily which grows in almost all the swamps, I have never seen it in England but suppose that it is at Kew. The wool trade is now in full swing, and this ship is taking home an almost full cargo of it. The noise of loading is almost deafening at the present moment two steam winches are working just over my head and sometimes four are going at the same time.

I heard in Brisbane that one or two of Trower's sons are out here but I do not know what they are doing, they have come out at a good time as I am told that things are looking up in the colony, the quantity of minerals of every kind is quite unknown; almost solid copper and tin can be got in the interior but the cost of transport quite kills the profits.

In many cases the freight from the coast to an up country station is £60 per ton. Opals have been found in several places and I have got a fair piece as a specimen for a pound, but the prices usually asked are about double the London ones.

The more I see of the colony the more it appears capable of producing anything, and the people look very healthy indeed, no one having the sallow appearance of old Indians. Sugar is the leading industry and the cost of purchasing freehold and getting in working order a farm is £6 as a maximum. The method of obtaining land is to apply for 2 square miles, the main price of which is £1 per acre, the owner or his bailiff must then reside 3 years and put on 10/- per acre improvements after which he gets freehold deeds from the govt.

In the case of a poor man he can have 10 years to pay the £1 per acre and put on the improvements but then does not get his title till the end of the 10 years. All the land obtained in this way comes direct from the govt. with a freehold title, it seems to be a very fair system and works well All the large runs are held on leases from the Crown which can be broken at any time provided the govt. declare that the land is required for public purposes such as making roads, laying out new townships etc.

I wrote to the New Zealand chief as soon as I received your letter and expect to find a reply waiting at the bank on my arrival.

I am sending home a lot of photos taken at Jimbour, please don't give many of them away as in event of the negatives being broken in transit to England I could not get any more of them, the one with the telescope gives a very good idea of the observatory.

As I said in a letter some time ago I hope to be in Hokitika at the end of May or if not there shall write to the bank of NZ to have my letters forwarded. I expect that Grover will be home about the last day in February The case of plants I am sending home by him seem to be very well packed and I have told him to follow the written instructions of the nurseryman.

Several of the orchids are, I believe, new. He will call on you directly he lands but, as I said before, if Mr Grahams {?} agent were at the dock it might be of use.

Your affectionate son,

*10 January {Wednesday} ... Arrived late in the evening at Townsville, landed in the evening and went to the Queen's hotel ... received a telegram from S J Peek saying that he would be in Townsville in a few days and hoping that he would see me ... {Transcriber's note - S J Peek appears to be an agent of some sort}*

*11 January ... "Day Dawn" mine ...*

*12 January ... another mine ...*

*13 January ... "Day Dawn" mine ...*

*14 January {Sunday} ... Went to the English Church of which Archdeacon Plume is vicar and met Miss Ross who came out in the "Liguria" with us ...*

## 14 January {Sunday} Queens Hotel, Townsville

I believe mails from New Zealand only go home once a month

My dear Father,

On Tuesday last I got here by the Merkara, Darwin going on to Singapore and Grover with all my instruments home. Next day at 8 o'clock I took the train to Charters Towers and got there about 1.30, the line goes through the usual bush country covered with gum trees, and has been very little cleared, the only curious thing about the journey was the way the train crosses the Bundikin river; this under ordinary circumstances is merely a small watercourse but in flood time is often 40 ft deep and a mile wide, when in this state large numbers of trees are carried down which would wash the bridge away.

Instead of building a bridge which would always be above water and which would cost a very large sum, it is laid almost in the bed of the river so that in flood time it is totally submerged and the trees float over it without doing any harm, of course railway traffic is suspended while the floods are out, but they never last more than a few days. Charter's Towers is at present one of the finest gold fields in Australia and has an enormous number of mines on it. I had an introduction from the Premier to the Warden and was introduced by him to two of the largest proprietors. On Thursday I went down the Day Dawn mine which is the richest on the field; we went down a steep incline about 300 ft when we came to the reef which is now being worked, in many places the auriferous quartz is 18 ft thick, while in most places it is 4 ft., the actual mining is done much in the same way as in a coal mine except that, of course, open lights are used, and there is very little water.

In the afternoon I went to the crushing mills, the quartz is placed under stampers which reduce it to a fine powder; it is then mixed with water and the whole allowed to flow over large copper plates (put on a slight incline) which are coated with mercury, the mercury arrests the particles of gold and the crushed quartz flows on into other pans when it is ground still finer and again treated with mercury, once or twice a day the mercury is gently scraped and the amalgam collected after which more mercury is put on, and the same process continued. When a considerable quantity of amalgam has been collected it is put into a cloth and all the fluid mercury is pressed out, the amalgam remaining as a hard ball. This is then put into a retort and the mercury distilled out leaving the pure gold as solid lump. It is now re melted and run into a mould which is sold to the bank or mint.

The result of a fortnights' working at the Day Dawn which I saw retorted was 540 oz: value about £4/1/- per oz as it is impossible by the present wholesale process to make it quite pure. The largest yield for this mine for a fortnight was 1900 oz: half of the mine belongs to two men who a few years ago were day labourers. I am very glad that I came up here as it is possible that the knowledge of the look of auriferous quartz may be of use on my way through the interior of New Zealand. I fancy that there are many worse things than taking up 2 sq miles (1280 acres) of sugar land in the colony, the cost is about £3 per acre to get the land and title, and about £3 more to get it into working order, but the whole thing depends on the labour question being settled and this will be the fight at the next election which takes place about July next The opposition do not hesitate to say that they would prefer the land to lie idle than employ coloured labour and it is an accepted fact that white labour cannot work in the plantations except in very exceptional circumstances.

This place is very prettily situated in a large bay and the hotel faces the sea which generally issues a cool breeze. Tomorrow I take the ASN boat Katoomba for Sydney and then go on to Auckland by the Pacific Mail when I shall at once call on the people to whom I have letters, I wrote some time ago to the Maori chief whose address you sent me and expect to meet him on my arrival. I hope the case of plants will arrive safely, the captain promised to look after them for me but it is rather a bad time for them to land if you have a hard winter. I find the letter of credit a very convenient method of getting money, as I draw the amounts I want instead of having to take a fixed sum.

I suppose that by this time you have seen Morris and heard from him the account of our Residence at Jimbour, he will soon leave for Natal for a large survey. Darwin will be home about the end of April as he has to join the Staff College at Aldershot in May. The photos sent by Grover will give you a fair idea of our camp and also of the natives of South Queensland who however are semi civilised, up here they are cannibals when they have nothing better to eat. Unless anything turns up in the meantime I shall be at Hokitika at the end of May and leave for home about July 1st.

Your affectionate son,

*21 January {Sunday} ... Spent the whole of the week coming from Townsville to Sydney ...*

**21 January {Sunday} Sydney**

My dear Father,

I have very little to say this week as I have been on the water ever since I last wrote. This letter should reach you before my last as it goes via America ...

I left Townsville on Monday in the Katoomba and got to Brisbane on Thursday; there I met Sam Peek who had telegraphed to me a few days ago, he is about 35 and is a gold assayer at a place called Ravenswood near Charters Towers; he appears to be doing very well and likes the work. He also appears to be a good chemist and is now preparing to start a company to recover the large quantity of gold which is known to be lost by the present mode of treatment which is purely mechanical.

There are two brothers Samuel and Charles, the father and mother live here so I shall probably meet them. He tells me that Richard is still alive though over 70, he has two sons but none of them is doing much and he does not appear to know much about them, they have a place between here and Bathurst.

On coming in to the port I saw the place where the Dunbar was wrecked, it is a false opening which on a dark night would look exactly like the proper entrance to the harbour.

As one comes in it is I think one of the most beautiful places it is possible to imagine and large enough to hold all the ships in the world. We passed close to the "Austral" which as you know was sunk in the harbour, she is lying almost upright with just the top of the bridge and half the funnels out of the water, a coffer dam is now being built round her, and when finished the water will be pumped out when she ought to float, the accident appears to have been the result of gross carelessness all round, as the captain was on board at the time.

I have taken my passage in the Pacific Mail boat which sails on Thursday next and hope to get to Auckland in about 4 days but do not know exactly the time.

I suppose Grover will arrive about the same time as this, I forgot whether I told you I had sent a specimen of opal by him, however I did not do so.

Your affectionate son,

*22 January ... spent most of the day arranging passage to Auckland (£10/-) ...*

*23 January ... took a buggy ...*

*28 January {Sunday} ... Left Sydney at 3.30 a.m. on Thursday in the mail steamer "Zealandia" ...*

**28 January {Sunday} SS Zealandia off New Zealand**

My dear Rector,

I have written you two elegant epistles since I have been out and hope that you have duly received them. I forget when I wrote the last so may perhaps repeat some news As soon as the transit was over we set to work packing up the instruments and managed to get them on board the steamer by the 3rd Jan, I went with them as far as a place called Townsville on my way to Charter's Towers which is one of the largest gold fields in the colony; while I was there it was very hot indeed, but not nearly so oppressive as I have often felt it in London, the thermometer however went up to 109; there is very little to be seen in a gold mine but as in duty bound went to the bottom of one; the ore is got out by blasting and then sent to the surface to be crushed and after that the gold is extracted.

When there I received a telegram from Samuel J Peek who is a son of Patey. He has a good business as a gold assayer and is also interested in mines, he has been in Queensland a long time. When I came south he joined me at Brisbane on my way to Sydney and when there I called on Patey. He is a very pleasant old man, quite blind from cataract, but takes great interest in all that is going on. He lives in a very nice house with his wife and daughter. Richard P lives about an hour by train from Sydney but does not appear to be very well off. He has two sons who don't appear to be over brilliant specimens.

I did not know that such a person as Richard existed, he is about 65 years old. If we are fortunate we ought to reach Auckland on Tuesday and I expect we shall do so as we are having a most splendid passage and the sea is quite smooth As I expected to be at Auckland by the beginning of the month I have not had any letters for a long time so expect to find a lot on my arrival. From all that I can hear I ought to have a very pleasant trip in the interior the only disadvantage being the abominable dirt and general filth of the noble Maoris huts and villages I suppose that Hayward has by this time worked his wicked will at Rousdon and that the bill has arrived on the scenes.

I imagine that it will be a pretty stiff one. The houses out here have rather a curious look as most of them are built and roofed with corrugated iron, it takes about a month to build a large place and is generally pretty comfortable inside though abominably ugly outside. On my way home I am going to stop at Gibraltar to see the Freemantles, you had better take a sea voyage as far as that so as to have the pleasure of returning immediately by the same route with

Your affectionate nephew,

PS This has been written under the inspiration of a series of Moody & Sanky hymns, I hope you can make it out.

**28 January {Sunday} SS Zealandia off New Zealand**

My dear Mother,

My last was written before arriving at Sydney, we got there on Sunday by the local steamer after having rather a rough passage from Townsville. On Monday I went for a drive to a bathing place called Coogee which is about 5 miles from Sydney and is rather pretty, it is one of the few places where bathing is safe on account of the sharks, but here there are a number of natural holes in the rocks which fill with the tide.

From there we drove on to Botany which is situated on a small bay with an entrance rather like the Heads at Sydney, however the water is very shallow and so large ships cannot put in, it is a very favourite place for picnics on Saturday and Sunday but during the week is entirely deserted, the tram way runs down to it in about half an hour from town.

On the way back I called on Patey P. he is quite blind but appears to take a great interest in all that is going on, he lives in a very comfortable house with his wife and daughter. In the evening I called on a lot of people who had come out in the "Liguria" with us. For the next two days there was not much to do except see the town, the museum is a very nice building and has a first rate collection of everything coming from any of the Australian colonies but chiefly natural history specimens.

On Thursday we left in this ship for Auckland and are having most lovely weather, the sea as smooth as possible and very few people on board, the boats are the best that I have been in yet and are far better than the Orient or any of the P and O that I have seen. If things go on as at present we expect to be in Auckland on Tuesday morning, the passage can be made much quicker but as the mail cannot leave before Tuesday night there is no object in being in a hurry.

The view of the entrance of the Sydney harbour coming straight on to it was most beautiful, it is certainly the finest harbour that I have seen and is supposed to be one of the finest in the world. The Dunbar was wrecked at a place called False Bay only a few hundred yards from the regular entrance, but in a place when it was almost impossible that anyone could be saved, only one man got up the cliff alive and it was many hours before he was rescued I hope that some of the seeds I sent home by Grover will do well.

There were a great many different kinds from all parts of the colony. I sent by the "Clyne" three cases of wine which ought to arrive about the same time as this, they are the three best Australian vintages but want keeping for about a year, one of the bills of lading will be sent with them, the other I have kept myself.

Your affectionate son,

PS I believe that the mail from New Zealand is only once a month but am not sure.

*30 January {Tuesday} ... arrived in Auckland ...*

**30 January {Tuesday} Northern Club, Auckland**

My dear Father,

Just a line to say that I have arrived here safely and have received your letter dated Nov 26 (no papers). Most of my letters will have extra postage to pay, I have had the same to do with yours. This will reach you with one written the day before yesterday. The place appears to be very pretty but I have not seen much of it as yet, I have no time for more as the mail is just closing.

Your affectionate son,

*2 February {Friday} ... left Auckland ... reached Wellington ...*

*11 February ... Sunday After service in the cabin we left West ??? ... and started for Doubtful Sound ...*

*21 February ...*

*23 February {Friday} ... left Kingston ...*

*24 February ... left the Criterion hotel ... reached Christchurch ...*

*27 February {Tuesday} ... Took the train to Springfield from where the coach starts for Hokitika ...*

*11 March Sunday ... sent the parcel {pencil?} note of the bird ??? home ..*

*15 March Thursday ... bought some very good bird skins and sent them home by ??? ...*

*16 March ... had a good passage to Auckland ...*

19 March {Monday} ... met a man who had travelled in the same boat to Iceland last year ...

23 March Friday ... {Last diary entry}

### 1 April {Sunday} Hamilton, New Zealand

My dear Father,

Last Sunday I wrote from Chinemutu {?} after having returned from the Hot Springs. On Tuesday we took the boat to return to Auckland and arrived on Wednesday morning. During the day I made the acquaintance of Mr. Fenton who is the agent for the land company and he arranged to leave Auckland with me yesterday which we accordingly did, arriving here last night. He has been for many years the chief judge in the native land court and has lived in the island all his life, and from all accounts a better man could not be found and he is very strongly in favour of the scheme. He however says that from 4 to 5 millions of acres is nearer to the mark with regard to quantity.

He cannot at all understand what is causing so much delay in London as every day is of importance, other companies being in the field. One company on the East Coast in which Russell is interested is introducing a bill to enable them to treat with the natives and whichever company is first in the field will win the day. The natives I understand much prefer the English scheme but fancy it will end in talk as it has been going on so long, and they will probably sell their land to the first bidder. During the week however I shall see several of the biggest chiefs and shall learn a good deal more. Fenton believes that Larkworthy is scared at the opposition of the local press. You will see the bill of the East Coast company marked in the paper I sent you a day or two ago.

I have only just got your letters dated Jan 23rd as they have had to be forwarded. There were two letters, 2 "Home News", 1 S James Gazette, 1 Do Budget Nov 17. All the budgets sent by Thorpe must have miscarried. Nothing came of the proposal to make absentees pay more taxes, it was a hobby of Sir George Guy's {?} which was never carried out. You will see in the papers I have sent a short account of some opposition to the govt: surveyor. This will probably exist for some time though private persons can go just where they like throughout the island. 23 of the rioters are in goal; on Friday I got an order to go and see them, the chief is a very ill looking man but the rest do not look better or worse than the others that I have come across. As Scott with whom I am travelling has a very large station I asked him a good deal about the best way to begin life in Australia.

He says that the only way that is possible to succeed is to go to a station up country and stop there for at least 18 months, after that to travel for several trips with a mob of sheep to whatever place they are going. No one ought to have more than £50 a year, as there are no expenses on a station and "remittance men" as they are called invariably go to the bad. It is much the same kind of life on a cattle as on a sheep station and at least 5 years ought to be spent between the two before thinking of buying or taking up land on one's own account. Coming out here without definite plans invites almost certain failure, getting "Colonial experiences" is pretty hard work but is the only chance of success. If Percy Caldecott is coming out he ought definitely to know where he is going, and if possible the station ought to be a few hundred miles up country.

If he did not succeed the experiment is not a very expensive one. The best possible thing would be to get a letter from the Duke of Marlborough who has £20,000 in the Darling Downs and Western Lands Company to Sir Arthur Palmer who is managing director; if he could get on one of their out stations he would have every opportunity to learn sheep farming, I don't think they go in for cattle much. In a letter some time ago you suggested that I should stop to see the Freemantles at Gib. and my mother says the same about the Fraynes at Cairo. With regard to the first it will be easier and quicker to go out in the P and O from England, as to do it on my way home I should have to change at Naples, from there to Syracuse, on to Malta and then to Gib.

I do not think I shall stop at Cairo either, as Egypt in August will be terribly hot. As far as I can make out the "Liguria" will leave Melbourne at the beginning of July, which will just suit me. I suppose your letters will reach me at Aden or Suez. This is an extremely pretty place, we are stopping in a cottage which belongs to the hotel overlooking a wide river, the Waikato, it is about the largest river in New Zealand and is here about 200 yds wide. After seeing this part of the country I am going to join Dr. Hector FRS for a trip through the bay of islands and shall then probably ride through the North Island by Lake Taupo to Wellington. In this way I shall see most of the best part of the country. I have not yet seen Sydney David te Taiwhanga {sic} the man who was in England.

Fenton tells me that he was once in his employ but had to get rid of him for dishonesty, he then became a schoolmaster and was got rid of for the same reason. Possibly this is the reason of his not answering my letter. The Ngaphuis to which tribe he belongs have now gone down very much in influence. Several generations ago in about 1830 Hougi Hika who was the great chief of the tribe marched through the whole of the North island destroying thousands of the natives. At one ?..? near here alone he destroyed 2000 Waikatos. At this time his was the only tribe that had fire arms; these he had received when on a visit to England from George iv. I suppose by this time the plants I sent home by Grover have got established if any arrived alive, as I hope they did. I shall not send home any ferns as people that have tried it tell me that they have always had bad luck.

Your affectionate son,

**22 April {Sunday} Munga iti Taupo {?}**

This letter .... F Larkworthy at .... 3 July 1883

My dear Father,

My last letter was from Kawan where I had been stopping with Sir George Frey {?} I left there on Wednesday to return to Auckland. The steamer calls at a number of small ports on the way and is passing among beautiful islands the whole time When I got to Auckland I went as usual to the club and got a room. On Thursday I called on Murdoch at the Bank of NZ and he very strongly urged me to telegraph to Larkworthy to say that the land scheme was in great risk of failure through inaction, Russell and Fenton the agent were both very strong on the subject.

As far as I can learn I do not think that there is the least doubt that 4,000,000 acres could be got at once with the probability of a good deal more in the future. Russell is in favour of it, but is also the chief man in the Eastern Land Company who are applying for powers to extend their operations, and unless the scheme is started before they get their bill it will have but a poor chance, though an amalgamation might be possible. Several men are collecting signatures from the most important chiefs, which will be forwarded soon, but of course a chief's signature is hardly worth the paper it is written on unless a deposit is made at the same time.

Murdoch and Russell both think that a start should be made at once and the concern wound up again if it was found to be impracticable. Russell is very strong on keeping the clergy in the prospectus; as I said in an early letter many people fancy that there is too much of the element but he says it will be important when colonists are required. Land all over the country is being taken up as fast as it can be got through the land court before which it is illegal to deal with the natives. The management of the Land Court however is giving rise to great complaint, in a recent case the whole of the value of the land was swallowed up in costs and the unfortunate natives had to pay £20 - £30 in addition. It is hardly possible for me to judge of the value of the land as so little is in cultivation but the fact of a company which has been working on the East coast wanting powers to come over to the west coast looks as if a good profit was to be made of it.

Fenton tells me that several persons who are in treaty with the natives for land want to join the Company and receive shares for the value of the money they have already expended. When in Auckland I went to one of the leading Kauri gum merchants and arranged to have a sample can of about 30 lbs sent home. It is is {sic} the base of all the various kinds of varnish and is chiefly found about the north part of the north island. It will not however in all probability reach England before I do. On Friday I started from Auckland for Taupo and took the train as far as Hamilton. At Hamilton the coach was waiting, and we drove about 14 miles to Cambridge where I had been before with Fenton. I arranged with the coach owner for a buggy to drive me to Taupo and we started about 8 a.m. For the first few miles the road is a very fine one but after that it is the merest track and in some places leads through swamps where one can only go with the greatest difficulty.

The track for a good deal of the way runs near the river Waikato, this is one of the finest rivers in New Zealand and is navigable for a considerable distance. In one part it has to pass through a gap in the rocks only 8 feet wide, both sides of this gap being at least 100 yards wide, the effect is very much like a mill race and of course quite impassable for canoes or boats. Most of the land over which the road goes belongs to the Pata terai land company (I don't know how it is spelt, but it is pronounced as I have written it) which was got up in England and of which a man named Halcombe is manager, I don't fancy the land is worth much but it is impossible to judge New Zealand land from an England standard.

The company believe that they have got a very good thing. When we had got about 45 miles on the road we came to some flat land full of dangerous holes, and heard that formerly it had been a vast system of hot springs, but that they had gone dry many years ago and only left the holes; we had to go very slowly to avoid them.

At about 5 p.m. we arrived here, there is nothing but an accommodation hut left by Maories and is a very uncomfortable place, we are a party of four as another trap joined us in order to get piloted over the dangerous ground. We have had to bring all our own food as the house can only provide potatoes, tea and condensed milk. When we got up this morning we had the satisfaction of finding that our horses had broken away during the night and so had to send a Maori boy after them. After about 6 hours he brought them back and told us that he had found them about 25 miles on the road to Cambridge. They would have gone straight on but fortunately were stopped by a gate over a bridge. At about 11 o'clock a large party of natives arrived on their way north from Taupo.

Their reception is a most curious one. When they have got about 10 ft from the people of the house they set up a most dismal howl which is called a tangi making a noise as if crying in the most violent way, this goes on for about an hour and as each gets tired of it they rub noses all round and then begin to talk. When all have finished one of the men on each side begins to make speeches to the other about current events and this lasts for about half an hour All this time the women have been preparing the food for the entertainment, this consists of potatoes, with boiled bacon and cabbage, and boiled dough. The drink is the water the cabbage and bacon have been boiled in!

The potatoes are cooked by digging a hole in the ground in which a heap of wood is placed, over this a heap of stones is made and covered with wood, the wood is lighted and when the stones have become red hot the potatoes are put on, some water is thrown on to make steam and the whole covered with blankets and earth. They are cooked in about half an hour and are very good.

In a few days I expect to be with Larkworthy's son at Sampson {?} and then go south for Tasmania. As far as I can make out the Liguria will sail at the end of June so I shall return in her.

Your affectionate son,

**20 May {Sunday} Melbourne Club**

My dear Father,

I was very sorry to get my Mother's letter in which she told me of the death of Aunt Ellen though from what you had said I was almost expecting it. My last was from the Bluff which we left on Saturday and reached here on Wednesday night. We had a fairly good passage and as I had a cabin to myself it was very comfortable. I like Melbourne very much better than I did when I first arrived, and it is certainly by far the finest town in the colonies. All the streets being quite straight and at right angles to each other makes it look rather formal at first but one gets accustomed to it in a few days. I received a long letter from Grover in which he appears to be delighted with Rousdon and I think you will find him a most useful man in many ways. By the last mail I received two letters dated March 30 and April 6. I do not know whether I gave you Hokitika as an address for the mail leaving London March 22 but have left word to have any letters or papers to be sent on here.

Next week I am going on to Tasmania and as I find that I shall have seen all that is worth seeing by June 22 I have taken my passage by the Orient Steamer "Chimborazo" instead of by the "Sonata" {?} which is the following boat, the weather is becoming very unsettled and so coach driving into out of the way parts is not at all pleasant. I fancy the rent from 1 Maid of Honour Row is up to Xmas but cannot be sure till I return. The museums here are very fine indeed and are certainly the best in the colonies, there is also a magnificent public library which is very much used by all classes. The observatory is also very well managed and I have been going carefully over it in order to get some ideas as to what will be wanted at Rousdon. A very well written book has recently come out called "Brighter Britain" on New Zealand, which gives first rate advice on the subject of emigration, it is well worth reading. Although the bad weather makes it unpleasant for travelling the rain is very much wanted, as, in Britain, the summer has been very dry and a great many sheep have died of thirst. Hops appear to be a very profitable crop, £100 per acre net is not at all an uncommon profit, while in one place I heard of £150 being made.

The crop does not seem to be so uncertain as in England but is unable to compete with the best English. Grover tells me that most of the plants arrived safely, I hope that there were some that were worth the trouble; there ought to be some good things among the seeds from Brisbane. I see by a paper that the imphee of which I sent a bottle of seed from Jimbour must be used green, as it is liable to ferment if stacked owing to the sugar in it, I suspect however that the climate will be too cold for it to thrive. Please send the enclosed on to Coles. I have not much to say this week as I have seen very little that is fresh or novel.

Your affectionate son,

**27 May {Sunday} Queenscliffe, Port Phillip Heads, Victoria**

My dear Father,

My last was from Melbourne where I remained till Thursday. There is a great deal to be seen round the town. The Zoological gardens have a very fine collection of Australian animals; supposed to be almost complete, as well as a good general assortment, the grounds are very large and well laid out. The lions are I fancy finer than those in the Zoo. On Tuesday I got an order to go over the mint which has the reputation of being the most complete in the world and the arrangements seem to be almost perfect.

The Australian coinage is now the same as the English in design, the "Sydney Mint" on the gold having been given up, and a very small M or S under the Queens head substituted. Sir Samuel Wilson (who bought Disraeli's place) has given a very fine hall to the university, it stands by itself and cost £30,000, he does not however appear to be at all popular out here. On Thursday evening I took the tram for Ballarat {sic} and arrived at about 1030 p.m. Next morning I got an order to go over one of the largest mines in the district, and saw all that was going on.

The cost of working is very much less here than at Charter's Towers. 4 dwt of gold to the ton of quartz will pay here as against 20 dwt which is required in most parts of Queensland, the quartz appears to have been crushed by the great weight of rock on the top of it and can be worked with a pick while in Queensland it all has to be blasted. The town is one of the pleasantest I have been in, the streets are very wide and magnificent buildings are scattered all about the township There is a very fine school of mines for training in almost every branch of practical science, and is largely made use of by students.

Unfortunately it rained almost the whole time I was there. On Saturday I took the train to come on here and in passing stopped for a few hours at Gelong {sic}, which is about 2 hours by rail from Melbourne. It is rather a nice place but the rain still kept on steadily. In the evening I got the train to come on here and found James Ashbury in it, he has been stopping at the club so I have seen a good deal of him but do not fancy him at all. He does not seem to have recovered from his trip up the ?ugir {?} yet. Watney I believe started home via the Straits of Magellan from Wellington about a week ago and so will arrive about the time you get this.

The English mail came in yesterday so I shall get your letters on Monday when I return to Melbourne I hope the plants arrived in fair order though I hardly expect some of them to live. You ought to receive two Wardian cases from the Brisbane gardens about the time you get this; as the curator told me they would leave in May or June. This is a very pretty place indeed, just at the mouth of the harbour and opposite to the Quarantine station where we had to stop when we first reached the colony, as it is not the season we are almost the only people in a hotel which will hold 200 I suppose that this will be one of the last letters you will get from Australia as I go to Tasmania on Tuesday and have taken my passage in the "Chimborazo" which leaves Melbourne on June 27 (I fancy I said June 22 in a previous letter) I shall join her at Adelaide.

Your affectionate son,

**29 May {Tuesday} Melbourne,**

My dear Father,

You will probably have heard from Larkworthy of the horrible mess the telegraph people made of my telegram, entirely changing the meaning; the following are the words of the code as written by the bank clerk together with copy of message sent:-

Imprudence	Inform
father	father
hardened	have
	travelled with
	Fenton among
	natives
besides believe	
thorns	them
baptism to be	
meadow	most
faithful	favourable
	scheme
thriven	time
illusion	of the utmost importance
	other
carriedscompanies	

fiction            forming  
 natives           natives  
 research         give preference to  
                       English  
 carried           company  
 dictator do not  
                       discard clerical  
                       element

The explanation of my change of opinion of the clergy is that the people here think in many cases that there is too much of it, but Murdoch and Russell both consider that it will be most important to have the aid of the clergy when colonists are required. No doubt several of my letters somewhat contradict each other as they merely conveyed the views I picked up as I went along, but I wrote you a long letter on the whole affair after I had been among the natives myself, which you will have long ago received. I don't fancy Kimber at all.

I was glad to hear that Percy had made a good picture of his Penelope. If such Edwin makes a long trip he could not do better than come out here by P & O or Orient (round the Cape) and go home from New Zealand by the New Zealand shipping Company via Cape Horn which is the route Watney has taken. If he could get Watney's servant, who has been a ships steward he would be very fortunate, as he seemed to be a first rate man. Watney will reach home about the same time as you get this. The papers do not come at all regularly, by this mail I have only received "S. James Budget" April 13 & Standard April 2nd. I fancy the fault is in England as Ashbury has just got all his (about 30) quite right. Last mail there were 2 S James Budgets but I think that was all that were due.

Your affectionate son,

I go to Tasmania this afternoon my last was from Queenscliffe last Sunday

### **3 June {Sunday} Hobart, Tasmania**

My dear Father,

My last was from Queenscliffe where I had been stopping with Ashbury. I came over here on Tuesday and arrived after a very good passage. The entrance to the harbour is most beautiful and with the exception of Sydney the finest in the colony. The town is situated a few miles up, on the left bank of the harbour, and is very much larger than I expected, though it is impossible from any one point to see the whole of it, as the ground is very undulating. As soon as I arrived I called on Lewis and Sons to whom I had an introduction from Cheapside and found them very pleasant people.

All day Thursday I spent in going over the principal buildings in the town, some of which are very fine and on Friday took the steamer up the river to New Norfolk. We started at 3.00 p.m. and arrived at about 6 p.m. The river is most beautiful and the scenery more like England than any other part of the colonies. The farms seem to be very much smaller than in the other colonies and so look very much more cultivated. Hops are a great crop in all this district, and this year have averaged 4/- per lb, the cost of production is almost £40 per acre Very large quantities of fruit are also grown and immense quantities of jam made New Norfolk is at the head of the navigation of the Derwent and is a very pretty place.

Next morning we took a trap and drove to the celebrated salmon ponds where large quantities of salmon and trout are bred every year. It is however very doubtful whether the real salmon has been introduced, but it does not do to support a doubt here. There are immense quantities of fish in the ponds and they seem to be very well looked over. The whole affair is under the control of the government. Unfortunately the morning was very raw and foggy, and so we were not able to see much of the scenery.

The weather all over Tasmania is getting very cold. This afternoon I went for a long walk with Lewis to the top of Mount Nelson from which a most magnificent view of the harbour can be got and the sun shining on all the creeks and inlets looked very beautiful. There is also a pleasant drive along the edge of the bay to a place called the shot tower.

All the roads in the colony were made by the convicts and are as good as any in England. Tomorrow I am leaving for the North and shall then go to the tin mines at Biskoff {?} which are reputed to be by far the most productive in existence.

From all accounts the mountain is one mass of tin and the greater part consists of 95 per cent oxide of tin. I hear that travelling in the interior of the island is very difficult, and the season is now too far advanced to venture on a trip out of the beaten track. I can quite understand people remaining out here to live. Except Adelaide which I have not yet seen, the three best towns for residence in the colonies are Auckland, Christchurch and Hobart, and I think I like Hobart the best of the three.

I am going to Adelaide by the P & O "Rome" and then on by the "Chimborazo" which leaves Melbourne on the 27th and Adelaide about the 29th. When I wrote last I said the papers had been arriving very irregularly but forgot that I had returned to the land of a fortnightly mail but think one is missing.

Your affectionate son,

#### **10 June {Sunday} Launceston, Tasmania**

My dear Rector,

Since I last wrote I have been having a most enjoyable trip in Tasmania. I went from Melbourne to Hobart which as you know is in the south part of the island and stopped there for a few days. It is by far the pleasantest town in the whole of the colonies and the only one in which I should care to live. Everything goes on in a quiet way and it is very pleasant to get to a place where people have an idea above sheep and cattle and the price of wool. The country too is like England.

From Hobart I went across the island and along the North coast. through most beautiful scenery to Mount Bischoff which is the largest tin mine in the world and is certainly a most remarkable place; to look at, it seems more like a sand pit than a mine, as the tin ore is taken out of the face without any pits or tunnels so that is possible to see the whole in comfort.

The town is a very odd one, it is in the middle of a huge forest and the ground is only enough cleared to allow huts to be built, fallen logs and stumps lying about all over the place. I leave for Melbourne on Tuesday and then go on to Adelaide where I join the Chimborazo for the voyage home I shall be very glad when it is over and I don't think I shall be the family admiral All my yachting will be done in mail steamers and that is monotonous enough.

I hear that a housekeeper is engaged for Rousdon, but cannot imagine that that is preparatory to living there. I hope as soon as I get back to begin to build a telescope, which will I fancy be a pleasant occupation. I suppose you have seen Grover unless you were at Malvern when he arrived, he is a curious looking mortal but a very decent fellow. A week or two ago I wrote to aunt Hanna addressing it to you, I suppose it has arrived all right. You have probably seen most of my letters so I cannot say much that is fresh, but can only hope that my absence has not worn you to a skeleton.

Your affectionate nephew,

**10 June {Sunday} Launceston, Tasmania**

My dear Father,

My last was from Hobart. On Monday I left by the early train to make a trip to the celebrated tin mines at Mount Bischoff; the railway runs through the middle of the island from Hobart to Launceston, but when about ten miles from the latter place I landed off and reached Deloraine about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The route all the way is through the most beautiful scenery and very much like many parts of England, the fields being quite small and very highly cultivated, the country is very hilly and the line has to twist about in a very curious way; in several places the ends of the train seem almost to meet. At Deloraine I had to stop the night and next day took the coach on to Emu bay which we reached at about 7 p.m.

The road has been cut through the forest almost all the way, and was made in the old days by the convicts. The gum trees grow to an immense height, many of them being quite 200 ft high, and as the cost of grubbing the roots would be very great they are killed by cutting a ring round the bark so as to allow the grass to grow under them. Next morning at 7 a.m. I took the tramway to go up to Bischoff, it is laid with wooden rails and the coach is drawn by two horses, the distance being 47 miles, the whole track has been made through the densest scrub, which is so thick the prospectors could seldom get more than 200 yds a day cutting their way all the time. Mount Bischoff, or Waratak (?) as the township is called is a most curious place; it is situated in a dense forest, and when a cottage was built it was necessary to cut down the scrub and fell the big trees; the stumps however are left in the ground and in the dark it is almost impossible to get about without falling over logs or stumps. The mine itself is in the face of a hill and is really more like a sandpit than a mine, the workings are in the face of a cliff about 100 ft high and 200 yds long all of which contains tin. 250 tons of ore per month is smelted and the 73rd dividend of 10/- per share is just advertised.

The shares are £5 with 25/- paid up and a dividend of 10/- is paid every three weeks regularly, the tin ore costs £9/- per ton on the trucks at the mine to produce. I went all over the works with the manager and saw all that there was to be seen, getting a quantity of specimens. On Friday morning I left and reached here last night after a very pleasant trip, the weather being lovely most of the time. On Tuesday I cross to Melbourne and on Tuesday week go to Adelaide by the P & O "Rome" where I catch the "Chimborazo" on the 29th. This will probably be the last letter you will receive I shall go straight through by boat to London.

I do not think I have missed anything worth seeing in the colonies and shall be glad to get the voyage over and begin building a telescope with Grover. I was very glad to hear that the birds look so well and if the cases sent by the "Duneray" (?Dimoray?) arrive safely we shall have a fine collection of New Zealand birds. I see by the papers that the "Merkara" in which Grover returned has been in difficulties in the Canal and that the Captain (Woods) is dead.

Your affectionate son,

**17 June {Sunday} Melbourne**

My dear Father,

My last was from Launceston. On Wednesday I took the boat to cross over here and spent Monday and Tuesday in seeing what there was to be seen in Launceston. It is not however nearly so nice a place as Hobart being situated in a hollow, and the river except at high tide is one mass of mud leaving only a very small channel for navigation. When however one gets a little way out of the town up on the hills there are some rather pretty walks but I was very glad to get away on Wednesday. The passage takes about 22 hours of which 7 are in still water.

There has been a good deal of excitement owing to a large ship the "Antelope" {?} having been wrecked about 3 miles from the Jaman Heads on a dangerous reef which is not marked. We passed within about 100 yards she looked very odd as, until we got quite close, she looked as if she was anchored as she was quite upright. The whole voyage appears to have been a series of mishaps, having left London last November. We had a fairly good passage across and got to Melbourne early.

During the day I took my passage home in the "Chimborazo" and go as far as Adelaide when I stop a week in the "Rome". By the last mail I got an Echo Globe and one "Budget" also a letter from my mother. In my last I said that I thought that the papers went wrong in England but there have been several complaints in the papers here that they have been stolen at this end As I have told you all about Melbourne before I have very little fresh to say and leave tomorrow for Adelaide.

I see by the papers that S C Selous {?} has got the grant from the Geographical Society for this year, he is the man from whom we got all the African heads and has I believe written a very good book on the country through which he went. All the colonies appear to be very keen on ?..? in all directions, it was quite necessary to take New Guinea but the scheme about the New ?..? is not quite so clear. New Zealand too want to try their hand at the same sort of thing. The secret of the whole affair is that each colony is so jealous of the other that they cannot bear one to get an imaginary advantage. I see that the NZ natives are selling their land fast but do not know who the buyers are, the great difficulty is to get at the value, as a good deal of land was shown to me which looked utter rubbish but which had been producing crops for generations without manure.

I don't fancy Fenton knows much about this, but it is pretty certain that he has more influence with the natives than any individual man in the colony. As I said in my last I will go round to London unless I hear from you at Plymouth or Naples.

Your affectionate son,

#### **24 June {Sunday} Adelaide**

My dear Mother,

My last was from Melbourne. On Tuesday I took the P & O "Rome" and arrived here on Friday morning at about 5 a.m. We had a most lovely passage and the ship is the finest I have ever been in, all the arrangements are most perfect and the cabins very large indeed. We had to anchor about 3 miles from the port as the water is not deep enough for the ship to come up any nearer and then we had to get into a launch which brought us up to the pier.

When there we had to take the train for about 3 miles and got to Adelaide about 8 a.m. I got a room at the club which is as usual very comfortable. The town is a very pleasant one, and by far the best laid out in the colonies, with the exception of Ballarat; all the main streets are much wider than in Melbourne and the buildings are finer. All round the town there is a very pleasant public reserve which cannot be built on and makes a very nice park, while beyond is where most of the business people live.

As soon as I arrived I made the acquaintance of the postmaster-general and he arranged for a trip with the governor to some copper mines up country; we leave tomorrow morning and get back again on Tuesday, going both ways by special train. All the buildings in the town are built of a very beautiful red sandstone which is found near, and is, when first quarried, very easy to carve, but hardens when exposed to the air We are having a great deal of rain just now, but it is wanted very much up country and all the r?? ???ers are looking forward to a good season if it continues, as in many years thousands of sheep and cattle die from want of water. While I have been travelling about I have met a good many of the people I came out with and hope I shall have as pleasant a party home again.

I leave on Saturday and you ought to get this about 5 days before I arrive in London. As I said in my last I shall (unless I hear from you at Plymouth) go round to London.

Your affectionate son,

**31 July {Tuesday} SS Chimborazo, Red Sea**

My dear Father,

I am writing this in the north end of the Red Sea but do not know when it will be posted, as on account of cholera in Egypt we may not call at Naples. We have had a very pleasant voyage home and the weather has not been nearly so hot as I expected. For the first few days after leaving Adelaide the sea was very rough, but since then it has been as smooth as possible except today; at the present moment there is a strong head wind with a certain amount of pitching. There are very few passengers on board, only 7 in the saloon, two emigration doctors going home, a mail steamer captain and his wife, an officer in the army and a young squatter going home to study medicine.

On the 16th we reached Diego Garcia one of the islands in the Chagos group where we had to coal and where we stopped for two days. The islands are composed almost entirely of coral and are covered with cocoanut palms and ferns; the palm trees were in full bearing and the foliage is very beautiful, there are a large quantity of nuts on board and I may get a sack or two to send to Rousdon for the school. The harbour is in the shape of a horse shoe with a very small entrance, but when once inside there is plenty of water, the whole group is under the Mauritius government. On the 26th we got to Aden, and anchored a couple of miles from the English barracks. As soon as the anchor was let go no end of boats came off with curios (very poor) and ostrich feathers for sale, some of the latter were very cheap.

The Parsis who sell them are very curious looking men with a very Jewish cast of countenance and two long curls hanging down from over each ear, they are great rascals and are very glad to get a third of the price that they ask for their feathers etc. After leaving Aden the only really warm weather that we have had began, and even then the thermometer was rarely over 90 in the shade on deck, as this is the hottest season I had expected to find it much hotter. This is a very slow boat and so we shall probably be about four days over our time. If we get to Plymouth by the 15th we shall do very well indeed, but a good deal will depend on whether we call at Naples.

Anyone landing there will have 15 days quarantine so it is very probable that we will go direct from Port Said to Plymouth. I got your letters just before I left Adelaide, in fact they were forwarded by this steamer so I found them on board, but no papers; only two papers have turned up for six weeks but I think they are stolen in Australia.

Your affectionate son,

PS Aug 2nd We are now about 20 miles from the North end of the Canal.

**Notes by Jerry Grover, great great grandson of Charles Grover.**

Grover, Charles, born Chesham, Bucks, March 1842, died and buried at Rousdon, Devon, February 1921; employed by John Browning, optical instrument maker, London, 1869 - 1882; accompanied Cuthbert Peek to observe transit of Venus in Queensland, 1882; astronomer and curator to the Peek family, 1883 - 1921. (Grover family archive)

Peek, Cuthbert Edgar, (1855-1901), amateur astronomer and meteorologist; BA, Pembroke College, Cambridge, 1880; MA, 1884; visited Iceland, 1881; set up observatories at Wimbledon, 1882, and Rousdon, 1884; observed transit of Venus in Queensland, 1882; at Rousdon made systematic astronomical and meteorological observations, of which he published annual reports; FRAS, 1884; FSA, 1890. (Dictionary of National Biography) Sir, and second baronet 1898

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