

Dear Fanny

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To the memory of my Mother, Grandfather, Father and
Brother, who gave me a sense of continuity of the past
(1837–1982)

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In a Dark Glass: the Story of Paul Edmund Strzelecki (1961)
The Leaping Blaze (1962)
Australia's Founding Mothers (1978)

Dear Fanny

*Women's letters to and from New South Wales,
1788–1857*

Chosen and introduced
by
Helen Heney



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Contents

Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Foreword	xiii
1 A First Fleet Convict Tells the Press	1
2 A Voice from the 'Floating Brothel'	2
3 Elizabeth Macarthur, the 'Happy Pioneer'	4
4 Mary Talbot to her Patron in England	6
5 The Romantic Bride	8
6 A Request for Money from Parramatta	9
7 Elizabeth Macarthur Puts Down Roots	9
8 Samuel Marsden's Homesick Bride	10
9 The Rev. Richard Cobbold Introduces Margaret Catchpole	14
10 Sarah Bird Begins her New Life	16
11 The Anxious Mrs Paterson	17
12 Enter the Real Margaret Catchpole	20
13 An Elderly Pioneer has Qualms before Sailing	22
14 Margaret Catchpole from her 'Place of Banishment'	23
15 Like a Great Tiger . . .	25
16 Eliza Kent Joins the Rush for Exotic Birds	26
17 Mrs Macarthur Tells Piper of the Irish Rising	27
18 Another Side to D'Arcy Wentworth	29
19 Eliza Kent to Piper on Norfolk Island	30
20 Compassion Makes Strange Bedfellows	31
21 Mrs Jennett Evans to Governor King	31
22 An Ex-convict Describes the Colony	33
23 Mrs Macarthur Expresses Forebodings	34
24 Bligh's Daughter Adds her Version	35
25 Mrs Macarthur to Piper on Norfolk Island	37
26 Mrs Wills to Mrs Harding	37
27 Margaret Catchpole Chronicles Yet Another Flood	39
28 Macquarie and the Augean Stables	39
29 Mary Ann Shears to the Father of her Sons	46
30 The Ageing Margaret Catchpole to her Uncle, William Howes	47
31 The Rev. Richard Cobbold Gives Free Range to his Imagination	49

32	The Great Success Story: Mary Reibey's Business Style	50
33	Ann Chapman Seeks an Assigned Servant	51
34	Mrs Macarthur, Alone Again, to Piper	51
35	Mrs Macquarie Underestimates the Opposition	53
36	Background to the Hassalls: Elizabeth Hassall to a Spiritual Sister	53
37	Mrs Macarthur on Life at Elizabeth Farm and Aboriginal Attacks, and Elizabeth jnr Describes her own Preoccupations with the Native People	56
38	Eliza Bent to Macquarie and the Honours of War Paid in Cash	57
39	. . . an Honest Livelihood	60
40	The Parson's Postbag	60
41	An Assigned Convict to her Employer, or a Scandal Made Public	65
42	The Slightly Improbable Sarah Thornton	66
43	Cloven, Not Crested: Eliza Walsh Stands for Sex Equality in 1821	67
44	The Embarrassments of an Employer	69
45	Elizabeth Macarthur to Miss Kingdon	69
46	Elizabeth Mitchell Presents a Conundrum to the Colonial Secretary	71
47	Poor Sally Henry (Mrs William Bland)	72
48	The Patient Griseldas	75
49	Janet Ranken to her Sister-in-law	77
50	New Light on a First Fleet Prisoner	77
51	Sarah Lawson to her Son	79
52	Christiana Blomfield and her Mother, Christiana Brooks, of Denham Court	79
53	Ann (Mrs Anthony) Hordern to her Mother	85
54	Eliza Bent to Piper, or Resentment Recollected	86
55	The Children Left Behind: Lucretia Hely and Priscilla Wemyss	88
56	One of Miss Makdougall's Many Polite Notes	89
57	The Extraordinary Case of Mrs Edwards-Lockay-Low Key	90
58	Napoleon's 'Betsey' in Sydney Society	91
59	Eliza Darling and the Dumaresqs	92
60	The Noun of Assembly is Macleay	99
61	Harriet King to her Husband, and Mary Lethbridge to her Mother, Mrs King snr	102
62	Mrs Macarthur's Darkening Scene	106
63	Mrs Macquarie Keeps in Touch	108
64	Miss Penelope Lucas to John Macarthur jnr in London	110

65	Elizabeth Cox and Mrs Mackenzie, to Mrs Piper on a Wedding at Clarendon	111
66	Mrs Edye Manning Chats to her Mother-in-law	114
67	Lady Parry to her Mother, Lady Stanley	117
68	Mrs Fay Dies of a Broken Heart: Mrs Arlett to her Son-in-law, Charles Fay	119
69	Sarah Wentworth Tells of her Father's Death	120
70	Elizabeth Fry to Marsden on the Female Convicts	122
71	'Judge not . . .' Mrs Colina McLeod to her Husband's Boss	123
72	Elizabeth Tells Edward the End of the Story	124
73	Mrs Sarah Suttor to her Husband George	124
74	Blaxlands, Ritchies and Dowlings, a Lively Lot, with an Echo from Lady Brisbane	125
75	Ann Gore to Friends in England	129
76	Eliza Darling has Definite Ideas about the Colony and its Affairs	132
77	News of the Ryries, 1838	133
78	Anne Deas Thomson to Sir Richard Bourke	135
79	Mrs A.J. King to her English Cousins	137
80	Maria Radford Answers 'Like the Frank Good Lady as You Are'	140
81	Mrs Dunlop: the Aborigines and the Press	141
82	The Vineyard Daughters Go North	142
83	The N.S.W. Carpet-baggers	147
84	Susan Spencer (<i>née</i> Dowling) to her Brother, James Sheen	152
85	Mary Ogilvie to her Daughter, Ellen Bundock	153
86	Elizabeth White Robertson Leaves an Incomplete Record	155
87	The Widow D's Story	157
88	In Defence of Mrs Reibey's Social Status	158
89	Lady Gipps Tries to Set the Record Straight	160
90	Mrs Ann Baker to Eliza Camfield in England and Maria Windeyer to her Son Willie in Sydney	161
91	A Garden Enclosed: Dame Magdalen Le Clerc and Dame M. Scholastica Gregory to their Mother Superior in England	165
92	The Death of Mrs Broughton Shows Eleanor Stephen (<i>née</i> Bedford) as Matron	168
93	News from an Overlander	169
94	A Refugee from the Germany of 1848 Describes Australia to her Relatives at Home	170
95	The Non-Flickering Lamp: Elizabeth Macarthur to Edward	171
96	Mrs Henry (later Lady) Parker, to her Brother Edward	174

97	Anne Hassall to her Son James	175
98	Lady Forbes Tells James Macarthur of her Regrets over her 'Overdelicacy'	178
99	Mrs Lang Presents Compliments to Mr Parkes	180
100	Three Women Write from the South	181
101	Epilogue: Two Australians Look at the Old World	185
	Index	189

Illustrations

Da-ring-ha, Colebee's wife, by Thomas Watling	5
Elizabeth (Mrs Samuel) Marsden (<i>née</i> Fristan) in her wedding dress	11
Elizabeth Marsden in old age	11
Notice of Escape of Margaret Catchpole	15
Elizabeth (Mrs William) Paterson	18
Margaret Catchpole	20
Holograph letter from Ipswich gaol by Margaret Catchpole	21
Esther Abrahams (Mrs George Johnston), First Fleet convict	43
Mary Ann (Mrs John) Piper	47
Elizabeth (Mrs Rowland) Hassall	54
Dr Bland's house	73
Christiana (Mrs Richard) Brooks, by Augustus Earle	81
Eliza (Lady) Darling with her children, by John Linnell	93
Elizabeth (Mrs Alexander) Macleay, after John Hopner	101
The King Family	103
Harriet Mary (Lady) Dowling	126
Anna Josepha (Mrs Philip Gidley) King	138
Anna Maria (Mrs Hannibal) Macarthur	143
Catherine (Mrs Patrick) Leslie	145
Emmie (Mrs George) Leslie	145
Annie (Mrs G.C.) Wickham	145
The Lowe home at Coogee	149
Government House, Parramatta, 1843	150
Mrs Mary Ogilvie	153
Maria (Mrs Richard) Windeyer	162
Elizabeth (Mrs John) Macarthur	172
Anne (Mrs Thomas) Hassall	176
The Prisoner of Gisore, sketch by Adelaide Ironside	187

Preface

When I finished my first book on Australian women, *Australia's Founding Mothers*, I found that I missed their company—those tough, cunning, courageous and vulnerable pioneers whose basic purpose was survival. And, like the amateur watchmender who found himself with one clock and enough pieces for another, I had among my references some which proved a gold mine, out of which I have tried to quarry an Australian 'first'—a collection of letters chosen from so rich a lode that I was forced to limit myself arbitrarily to letters basically to and from women in New South Wales and to a period as long as Victoria's reign. In so doing I made a discovery which made me extend it by two slightly later letters, which rounded off the sequence.

Letters are a special branch of literature, and Australia still has much to add to Rachel Henning's unconscious masterpiece. So far as I know, there is not yet a comprehensive anthology, so I did not have far to search for material to include; indeed the real problem was the quantity that had to be omitted. But this, I hope, will point the way for others to delve into the big family records such as the Hassall Papers or the Darling-Dumaresq Papers, not to mention the long years of Elizabeth Macarthur's correspondence with friends and relations and absent sons.

Letters are the most vivid form of writing, the expression of a need too urgent to be suppressed. My writers, no matter by what passion they were moved—love, hatred, spite, interest, excitement, wonder, revenge, or simply an axe to grind—had to get their feelings on paper. No wonder the result makes fascinating reading, from the first woman prisoner's complaint to the rapture of Adelaide Ironside discovering the artistic stimulus of the old world and Elise Breton, onlooker at a private ball of Queen Victoria, who found her most welcome compliment that of being recognised as an Australian. In that short span of time—1788–1856—something new had come into being; and here are the steps. These were the women who put down roots and found a sense of identity—that comfort women now seem in danger of losing.

Of the work itself, I am grateful to Patricia Croft for her skill in shortening and compressing the introductions and references and explanations that are intended to sketch the background of each letter and its writer, so that the original writers make a stronger impact. To add still more to this, I have left the letters untouched, with misspellings, word omissions, and gaps where too frequent readings has turned a fold into a tear, or too eager breaking of the seal has damaged the text; and above all, I have let stand the punctuation and capitalisation in use at the time.

Within the letters I have also left the original spelling of proper names—for example, McLeay, McArthur, Reiby—but in the introductions I have used modern spellings.

Of the letters themselves, let them speak for themselves. I will only add that many of the writers would have easily been incorporated as characters by our greatest novelists. Hardy might have appreciated Margaret Catchpole; Dickens, Mrs Luttrell; Trollope, Mrs Stephens on the death of the Bishop's wife; the romantic Mrs Kent would have fitted easily into Isabella Thorpe's circle; and Elizabeth Macarthur and Penelope Lucas become friends of Jane Austen herself.

For material, except for one letter kindly lent by Janet Ryrie, I did not have to go beyond the State Libraries of Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, and basically the Mitchell Library, the Dixson Gallery and the NSW Archives. I am greatly indebted to the National Library of Australia for permission to use material from the Rex Nan Kivell Collection and to the kindness of individuals for illustrations, and to the authors acknowledged in the notes and text for quotation from their published works, or suggestions for further source material.

And finally, I am grateful to those long-dead and still eloquent women for the discovery that in the short period I selected, something new had come into being—the race who, in a wide range of faults and virtues, represents the Australian woman. Some made the history books; all are the stuff of our histories.

Helen Heney

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My debts of gratitude are many: to those who gave me of their time and allowed me access to family manuscripts and portraits; to those who carried out additional research for me in near and distant places and drew my attention to new and valuable sources; to the institutions and their staffs who helped me delve into their collections and gave me permission to reproduce portraits, etc. from those collections. (Specific acknowledgments are made in the captions to the plates.) To all who have helped me so generously I offer my very warm thanks and appreciation, and ask forgiveness of any whom I may have failed to list below, by institutions and individually.

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Apologies are due to Dr George Nadel and Dr B. Champion, whose present addresses I have been unable to obtain, and thanks to the Royal Australian Historical Society *Journal and Proceedings* and the then secretary, Miss Johnston, for her efforts to locate them.

The staff of ANU Press, in particular its former editor, Mrs Jane Basinski, for the care she has shown in bringing this work to fruition.

To any others whom I could not contact I make apology, having tried to announce my intending use of their material by advertisement in the *Government Gazette* in May 1981. I ask anyone whose name I have omitted to accept my apology.

Helen Heneey

Foreword

Women's history has a dual goal: to restore women to history and to restore our history to women.

Joan Kelly-Gadol, 'The Social Relations of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, (4), 1976.

As recently as 1970, women in Australia suffered a sense of collective amnesia. Where were the women in the stories that we were told about Australia's past? Who were they, and what had they been doing during the succession of public events which established white settlement in this country? What had they thought and felt about themselves, each other, and the land in which they had come to live? We could find no answers to such questions in the histories that we had encountered; passing reference to an 'exceptional' woman told us little, if anything, about our great-great-grandmothers and the conditions of their lives. So we set out to look for the answers in other places.

Women's history in Australia has come a long way since that time. We have generated a slowly increasing number of memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, and tapes of interviews; we have produced bibliographies—both of works already in print that we had not known about because they had been ignored by the history establishment, and of sources in archives about women in the past; and we have prompted a steadily growing number of articles and books about the changing place of women in Australian society. Our collective memory, in all its diversity and variety, is gradually being restored.

With such growth has come greater complexity, and debate about the meaning of women's history's other goal: to restore women to history. Does this mean simply adding landmarks and names to a map that has already been drawn, or does it mean reconsidering all the established boundaries and signposts, re-drawing the whole map of Australia's past from the beginning? Answers to those questions have varied. The most persuasive that I have met is encapsulated in the observation that one does not simply add the idea that the world is round to the notion that it is flat. But more important than any answers spelled out in debate is the cumulative effect of all the work that has been and is being done in women's history for that is demonstrating not only how much richer in detail and texture is a story that can include Ann Robinson's outburst against D'Arcy Wentworth as 'a great Tiger' as well as his paternity of William Charles

Wentworth, but also how much more accurate an account of the formation of a whole society is a story which can set Mrs John Gilbert's experience of childbirth while droving along the River Murray beside tales of mateship among the overlanders.

Both Ann Robinson's verbal attack on Wentworth and Mrs John Gilbert's evocation of the scrub, sand and dirty rain that attended her confinement after a day of pursuing missing bullocks are to be found among the letters that Helen Heney had assembled to make up this book. It is a splendid collection, one for which everyone—students and writers of women's history throughout the world, students and writers of the history of Australia, and general readers—will be grateful to her. These letters prompt us to ask questions about the extent of women's work in the continuing management of pastoral production in New South Wales, the foundation of capitalist development in Australia. They teach us the importance of women's initiatives in establishing retailing houses in Sydney, and in creating the orchards and vegetable gardens which began making white settlement in New South Wales self-sufficient in food. In at least one instance such initiative produced so great a profusion that Elizabeth Macarthur was feeding peaches, apricots and melons to her pigs. Here, we can find the real story of Margaret Catchpole, rather than the fiction that an English clergyman created, and an illuminating example of how myths about the work of one woman, Mary Reibey, can become entangled with tales about the work of others.

When she had finished writing *Australia's Founding Mothers*, published in 1978, Helen Heney found, she tells us, that she missed the company of 'those tough, cunning, courageous and vulnerable pioneers whose basic purpose was survival'. However, her extensive research for her first book about Australian women had provided her with leftovers so rich that she has made with them a whole new feast.

These letters offer insights not only into the experiences of women in the formation of white Australian society, but also into the ways in which those women thought about themselves and the conditions of their lives. Where else would we encounter this remedy, tried by the second wife of Sir Edward Parry, for the prospect of an unwanted addition to their family? 'A hot bath, a tremendous walk and a great dose of salts have succeeded,' she reassured him. In how many other histories concerned with the 1840s in New South Wales would we discover that both husband and wife regarded further increase of the family with 'horror'? This was, after all, less than twenty years after Christiana Blomfield, having told her aunt of her fifth pregnancy, wrote: 'I think your Aunt Matilda will say we stock our houses too fast now, but in this country we are considered very moderate folks'. Such insights have been difficult to come by for any period of our history; to have discovered them for the earliest decades of white settlement in New South Wales is a very considerable, and valuable, achievement.

Besides nourishing a fuller understanding of Australia's past than we could have met with before, *Dear Fanny* offers moments of great delight.

Here, for instance, we meet Sophy Dumaresq boasting that her husband is 'the *very best nurse* you can imagine' for their new-born son:

Whenever his boy wakes up during the night wh. he usually does two or three times for me to nurse him, Col. Dumaresq takes him up & *holds him out*, wh. the *young man* quite understands, & immediately performs what is required of him.

Sophy notes as well that 'it is quite extraordinary how *used* I am become to *these sort of things* . . . wh. you know was not the case *once* I was obliged to get you & Louise to talk abt. water closets for me to Col. Dumaresq. Do you remember?' *Dear Fanny* introduces us, too, to Maria Windeyer, telling her son:

My cow who is known by the name of Tea Pot has not been out of the yard since she arrived from Tomago . . . is very wild & bolts at me every morning till I give her some potatoes, all our animals you must understand are great pets . . .

Tea Pot, and her hens, were important to a woman who had 'just gobbled up two Custards'. She declared her cow 'the joy of our household & the envy of my neighbours', not only for the custards but also for the dishes of cream beaten up with sugar and flavoured with lemons or brandy which stocked her table.

Such preoccupations stand a long way from those of the anonymous convict woman who wrote of 'this solitary waste of the creation' in the first letter of this collection. Many of these letters show, either through rejection or acceptance, a strong sense of the spirit of place that Australia presented to its earliest European colonists. It was a sense which Helen Heney is acutely tuned to recognise: after spending her postgraduate years in, first Italy and Germany, and then Poland, she felt that she could never again be completely at home anywhere. But she also acknowledged that, after the loneliness of her first European winter, she could not now live anywhere but Australia. Her heightened sensitivity to nuances of response to place in these letters contributes importantly to the shape of the whole collection.

In *Dear Fanny*, Helen Heney has increased the number of our friends, and changed our understanding of the contours of Australia's past. It will be difficult, henceforth, for anyone to write a history of the early years of white settlement in this country as though the earth was flat.

Susan Magarey
Research Centre for Women's Studies
University of Adelaide

There be many shapes of mystery,
And many things God brings to be,
 past hope or fear,
And the end man looked for cometh not,
 but a path is there where no man thought,
So hath it fallen here.

From Euripides' *Alcestis*, trans. Gilbert Murray

. . . in a country where there are no great buildings, where there never has been the will to conceive of great buildings (which is to say great and permanent functions), history is always in the present. It is ridiculous to postulate the past as something separate.

From Rodney Hall, *Just Relations*,
by courtesy of the author

1 *A First Fleet Convict Tells the Press*

Written less than a year after the inauguration of the new British penal colony of New South Wales, this letter by an unknown convict presents the colony as seen from below, from the female worm's eye view. It depicts the physical setting of the colony; its keynote—survival.

Several similar letters were published. Apparently they were given by their recipients, the prisoners' 'patrons', to various English and Irish newspapers to satisfy interest in the colony. Probably they were touched up by different editors to suit the newspapers' attitudes to government, but the contrast in literacy between this letter and that of, say, Margaret Catchpole (see L. 12) is striking.

The draft of this letter may have come from one of the literate convict women; for example, Isabella Rosson (the first schoolmistress). Perhaps one of the officers from the storeships mentioned at the close of the letter (*Fishburn* and *Golden Grove*) or a male convict such as Robert Sidaway or ex-naval officer Charles Peat, or even an official such as Surgeon George Worgan, may have been the amanuensis. The letter was smuggled out on one of these ships, which did not carry convicts but had been in port long enough for various liaisons to be formed.

Port Jackson, 14th November, 1788

I take the first opportunity that has been given us to acquaint you with our disconsolate situation in this solitary waste of the creation. Our passage, you may have heard by the first ships, was tolerably favourable; but the inconveniences since suffered for want of shelter, bedding, &c., are not to be imagined by any stranger. However, we have now two streets, if four rows of the most miserable huts you can possibly conceive of deserve that name. Windows they have none, as from the Governor's house, &c., now nearly finished, no glass could be spared; so that lattices of twigs are made by our people to supply their places. At the extremity of the lines, where since our arrival the dead are buried, there is a place called the church-yard; but we hear, as soon as a sufficient quantity of bricks can be made, a church is to be built, and named St Philip, after the Governor. Notwithstanding all our presents, the savages still continue to do us all the injury they can, which makes the soldiers' duty very hard, and much dissatisfaction among the officers. I know not how many of our people have been killed. As for the distresses of the women, they are past description, as they are deprived of tea and other things they were indulged in in the voyage by the seamen, and as they are all totally unprovided with clothes, those who have young children are quite wretched. Besides this, though a number of marriages have taken place, several women, who became pregnant on the voyage, and are since left by their partners, who have returned to England, are not

likely even here to form any fresh connections. We are comforted with the hopes of a supply of tea from China, and flattered with getting riches when the settlement is complete, and the hemp which the place produces is brought to perfection. Our kingaroo rats are like mutton, but much leaner; and there is a kind of chickweed so much in taste like our spinach that no difference can be discerned. Something like ground ivy is used for tea; but a scarcity of salt and sugar makes our best meals insipid. The separation of several of us to an uninhabited island was like a second transportation. In short, every one is so taken up with their own misfortunes that they have no pity to bestow upon others. All our letters are examined by an officer, but a friend takes this for me privately. The ships will sail tomorrow.

Source: *Historical Records of New South Wales (HRNSW)* vol. 2, Appendix E: British Museum (BM) Papers, pp. 746–7.



2 A Voice from 'the Floating Brothel'

The *Lady Juliana*, the 'floating brothel' (see Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships*) arrived in port in June 1790, after a slow and comfortable voyage, a few days before the terrible ships of the Second Fleet. She was the first vessel to break the two years' isolation of the colony, caused by the loss of the faster *Guardian*, wrecked in transit. In some measure she relieved the general shortages, but she did more: according to Watkin Tench she brought some 225 women to the largely male settlement, women whom crime or misfortune had condemned to exile. She was surely the strangest transport to reach Sydney: her captain encouraged the women to set up marquees on deck when she was in port, so that they could practise their trade; and when she sailed from the Canaries she was escorted by two slave ships whose officers regularly availed themselves of the prostitutes' services. Anyone tempted to grow sentimental over the early women prisoners should read the account of the *Lady Juliana's* steward, John Nicol (*The Life and Adventures of John Nicol, Mariner*). Most of the women were young, and soon married; some of the country girls travelled in the spirit of voluntary immigrants glad to escape the rigours of agricultural poverty. The varied and colourful human cargo introduced a light-hearted note into the grim little colony. Here, our untraceable writer presents almost a journalist's picture. It balances both the official view of such male chroniclers as the pessimistic David Collins, the optimistic Watkin Tench, the laughter-loving surgeon George Worgan and the savagely critical Arthur Bowes (Smyth) and Ralph Clark, and the account of Mary Talbot, the first identifiable woman to describe her experiences to her patron—see L. 4.

Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, 24th July 1790

We arrived here, safe after a long voyage, in very good health, thanks to our good agent,* on board, and the gentlemen in England who sent us out, as we had everything that we could expect from them, and all our provisions were good. We landed here 223 women and twelve children; only three women died, and one child. Five or six were born on board the ship; they had great care taken of them, and baby linen and every necessary for them were ready made to be put on. The greatest part of the women were immediately sent to Norfolk Island, a place about 100 miles from here, but very bad for shipping; there is no place to land at but in very fine weather. The Sirius, man-of-war, was lost at this place about six or seven months ago, when she carried some men and women from here. She landed them all safe, but lost almost all their provisions. This place was in a very starving condition before we arrived, and on allowance of only 2 lb of flour and 2 lb of pork for each man for a week, and these were almost starved, and could not work but three hours in the day; they had no heart, and the ground won't grow anything, only in spots here and there. There is a place called Rose Hill, about twenty miles from this, where, they say, there are four cornfields, but it does not grow much wheat; we are now in want of almost everything; we have hardly any cloaths; but since the Scarborough, Neptune, and Surprize arrived we have had a blanket and a rug given us, and we hope to have some cloaths, as the Justinian, a ship that came from London with provisions, [is] bringing some cloth and linen, and we are to make the cloaths. Oh! if you had but seen the shocking sight of the poor creatures that came out in the three ships it would make your heart bleed; they were almost dead, very few could stand, and they were obliged to fling them as you would goods, and hoist them out of the ships, they were so feeble; and they died ten or twelve of a day when they first landed; but some of them are getting better. There died in their way on board the Neptune, 183 men and 12 women, and in the Scarborough, 67 men, and in the Surprize, 85. They were not so long as we were in coming here, but they were confined, and had bad victuals and stinking water. The Governor was very angry, and scolded the captains a great deal, and, I heard, intended to write to London about it, for I heard him say it was murdering them. It, to be sure, was a melancholy sight. What a difference between us and them. God bless our good agent (I don't mean the captain). We had no reason to complain against him for anything; all our provisions and cloaths were good. I don't think I shall ever get away from this place to come again to see you without an order from England, for some of the men's times were out, and they went and spoke to the Governor about it, and told him that they would not work. He told them that he could not send them home without orders from London, and if they would not work they should have nothing to eat, so they almost all went again to work, except ten, who were saucy, and the Governor ordered them a good flogging; but all that came from London in the First Fleet time will be out in less than two years' time. I hope you will try to get an order for me, that I may once more see you all.

* Lt Thomas Edgar, who had sailed with Cook on his last voyage. The agent dealt with clothes, medical supplies (with the surgeon) and any little comforts available.

Source: HRNSW vol. 2, Appendix E: BM Papers, pp. 767-8. Reprinted from *Morning Chronicle*, 4 Aug. 1791; see also Watkin Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years* (Sydney, 1961).



3 Elizabeth Macarthur, the 'Happy Pioneer'

Elizabeth Macarthur, the 'Happy Pioneer'—a title used in Barnard Elder-shaw (ed.), *The Peaceful Army*—is not only our best known female pioneer but one of the most fascinating. Her steady stream of letters recreates the growing society for sixty of its vitally formative years. Elizabeth's vitality, her robust common sense, her unfailing dignity and good taste, her courage in the face of the deaths of two of her best loved children, and above all her unshaken faith under the terrible burden of her husband's insanity and his rejection of her at the last, have made it impossible not to draw freely on extracts from her total corpus of letters. They are essential to the warp on which the tapestry of Australian life was woven.

This letter is part of a long letter journal written to her mother in England and reprinted from the original in the Mitchell Library. (Her first letter to her mother has not survived.) The bay she visited on her harbour excursion was probably Watsons Bay, and the 'Captain Nepean' she mentions is Nicholas Nepean, her husband's superior officer. The friends whose departure she so regrets were the three officers to go to Norfolk Island: Captain Hill, Lt Abbott and Mr Prentice.

Elizabeth's comments on the natives make an instructive contrast with those in L. 1.

1791

. . . I shall begin my relation now of things more immediately occurring to myself. It will be unnecessary to go over the chit-chat of my last letter, such as the state of our house, the attentions we meet with, &c., &c. We pass'd our time away many weeks cheerfully, if not gaily—gaily, indeed, it could not be said to be. On my first landing, everything was new to me—every bird, every insect, flower, &c.—in short, all was novelty around me, and was noticed with a degree of eager curiosity and perturbation that after a while subsided into that calmness I have already described . . .

Still, I wanted something to fill up a certain vacancy in my time, which could neither be done by writing, reading, or conversation. To the two first I did not feel myself always inclined, and the latter was not in my power, having no female friend to unbend my mind to, nor a single woman with whom I could converse with any satisfaction to myself, the clergyman's wife being a person in whose society I could reap neither profit nor pleasure. These considerations made me still anxious to learn some easy science to fill up the vacuum at many a solitary day, and at length, under the auspices of Mr Dawes, I have made a small progress in botany. No country can exhibit a more copious field for botanical knowledge than this. I am arrived so far as to be able to class and order all common plants. I have found great pleasure in my study: every walk furnished me with subjects to put in practice that theory I had before gain'd by reading; but alas, my botanical pursuits were most unwelcomely interrupted by Mr Macarthur's being attacked by a severe illness. In December he got better, and in January we were removed into a more convenient house.

. . . I have not yet seen the famous settlement of Rose Hill . . . All the ground works and farming schemes are carried on at Rose Hill, tho' the headquarters are here. The last harvest

was a very poor one, the wheat and barley not yielding thrice the quantity that was sown. The Indian corn return'd something more, but it was altogether a poverty-struck harvest.

It is very likely my next letter to you may be dated from Rose Hill. Captain Nepean has an idea that the Governor will remove the remainder of his detachment and men thither as soon as the barracks are completed, which are already half-finish'd . . .

On harbour excursions:

I have been enabled to put but one in execution, and that was to a bay near the harbour's mouth, about six miles from Sydney. We passed the day in walking among the rocks and upon the sands very agreeably. I look'd carefully for some shells for you, but could find none better than what you can get at Bude or Widemouth . . . Of my walks around Sydney the longest has not extended beyond three miles, and that distance I have, I believe, only ventured upon twice—once to a farm, which Captain Nepean has for his company, to which we sent our tea equipage, and drank tea on the turf; and once to a hill situated between this and Botany Bay, where I could command a prospect of that famous spot.

. . . the natives visit us every day, more or less. Men, Women, and children; they come with great confidence, without spears or any other offensive weapon. A great many have taken up their abode entirely amongst us, and Bannylong and Coleby, with their wives,



Da-ring-ha, Colebee's wife, by Thomas Watling (1791), by courtesy of the British Museum (Natural History).

come in frequently. Mrs Coleby, whose name is Daringe [sic], brought in a new-born female infant of hers for me to see about six weeks since. It was wrapp'd up in the soft bark of a tree, a specimen of which I have preserved. It is a kind of mantle, not much known in England, I fancy. I ordered something for the poor woman to eat, and had her taken proper care of for some little while . . .

My spirits are at this time low, very low. To-morrow we lose some valuable members of our small society, and some very good friends. In so small a society we sensibly feel the loss of every member, more particularly so those who are endear'd to us by acts of kindness and friendship. From this circumstance, and my former letters, you may be led to question my happiness; but thus much I can with truth add for myself, that since I have had the powers of reasons and reflection I never was more sincerely happy than at this time. It is true I have some wishes unaccomplished that I think would add to my comfort; but when I consider this is not a state of perfection I am abundantly content. Adieu.

Source: Sibella Macarthur Onslow, *Some Early Records of the Macarthurs of Camden* (henceforth, *Macarthurs of Camden*), pp. 22, 28, 31, 32, 37, 39.



4 *Mary Talbot to her Patron in England*

Mary Talbot is the first convict writer we can identify, since her story, like that of the later Mary Bryant (the best-known female First Fleeter, subject of several books and later protected by James Boswell), aroused enough interest to be summarised by the paper, *The Dublin Chronicle*, which published her letter on 1 November 1791.

Wife of an Irish stonemason who was injured at work, Mary Talbot stole to support the family, was caught and tried. She refused efforts to help her by arranging her passage to America, though this meant leaving her children behind. This story, if true, argues some powerful influence exerted on her behalf. In spite of all efforts, she was sent to Australia alone, and on the voyage wrote this letter to her benevolent patron.

There are several letters from prisoners with some influence directing correspondence to Governor Phillip's canvas home—at first, the only office where he and David Collins worked—and later to the permanent Government House.

One wishes that her story could have had a happy ending, but burials for August 1792, according to John Cobley (*Sydney Cove 1791–92*), included a Mary Talbot (not a very common name), making her another humble victim of the general brutality of her time.

St Jago, 29th March, 1791

Most Honoured Sir,

Your past kindness to me induces me to trouble you with some account of where I am, and what kind of voyage I have had; the latter however, cannot be a very favourable one, for

we have been surrounded by danger. We sailed from Portsmouth the 23rd of February, with the wind much against us, and were so much in danger that we feared we should have shared the fate of a ship which was lost within sight of us. Our good captain very kindly dropped anchor at the Nore, but did not stop more than one night, and sailed for the Downs, where we sent our pilot on shore. On the 25th and 26th, along the coast, we had a violent storm, which lasted twenty-four hours. During every moment of its continuance we expected to perish, and were washed out of our beds between decks, while the sea-sickness and the groans and shrieks of so many unhappy wretches made the situation we were in truly distressing, for there were 138 women and five children, two of the latter born after we sailed, and only one died on our passage hither, where we remain no longer than is necessary to repair the ship and take in water. Our captain hopes we shall arrive at Botany Bay in August, if it please God the weather should prove favourable. This is a very fine island, supposed to be very rich, but the inhabitants I have seen are principally blacks. The general produce is poultry, hogs, and goats, which are very fine of their kind; and rich fruits, such as oranges, melons, &c., are very plentiful and cheap. The 16th of March we crossed the Line, where we were dipped in a tub of salt-water by the sailors, and tarred all over, it being a rule amongst them to make every one pay so much money or undergo this, and we all shared the same fate. I have been greatly distressed by want of money, because I came away without being able to see my husband.

If, sir, you have any success in your application for my pardon, you can send it me by any of the captains coming out to Botany Bay, which, I am sure, your goodness will endeavour to do for the sake of my motherless children; they are the only cause of my anxiety and unhappiness. I hope your generous exertions, aided by the goodness of God, will one day restore me to them; yet, whether you succeed or not, that God, I sincerely hope, will reward you—fully reward you—for your past unequalled kindness to me. Pray, sir, be good enough to let my husband know you have had a letter from me, and beg him to take care of my dear children. I think it hard I did not see him before I sailed, for we laid a week at Gravesend, and I should have left my country less sorrowfully had I given him my last charges and bade him farewell.

If you will send to me, sir, direct it to be left for me at Governor Phillip's, New South Wales, and to say anything in behalf of my character—it will serve me much; and if you can write immediately, the letter will be there before me, and mention that I am coming in the Mary Ann, Captain Murrow [Monroe], because your recommendation, in the most trifling degree, will do me great service on my arrival.

I hope you will excuse my being so troublesome to you. I sent you two letters from Gravesend . . . but as the man never came I hope you did not send anything . . .

We are much better off than we expected, and have as much liberty as our unhappy situation possibly allows. I am much better in my health than I have been for some time, and with God's assistance and yours I do not despair of yet living to be a comfort to my children. This, sir, is the only prayer for herself in the heart of one bound in duty and by gratitude to pray for you and your family as long as her life and heart have power to think of or utter a prayer to God, and who is your most humble and obedient servant,

Mary Talbot

Source: HRNSW vol. 2, Appendix E: BM Papers, pp. 779–80, reprinted from *The Dublin Chronicle*, 1 Nov. 1791.



5 The Romantic Bride

Eliza Kent, a silly romantic girl like Isabella Thorpe in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, matured into a troubled navy wife. She married her cousin, Governor Hunter's nephew, and came with him twice to Australia. Here she occupied the best house in the colony, later the Female Orphan School, at the top of Bridge Street. She acted as Hunter's hostess; indeed she had come to Sydney for that purpose at Hunter's request.

Eliza accompanied her husband on the *Buffalo* to India, where she had a very good time, then to Malaysia and the East Indies (see L. 16), and returned to England. Poverty and anxiety over her children brought her, like her husband, to an early death.

Leith Thursday March the 8th 1792

To the betrothed of her Soul! her Life! her Lord! her Husband!

My beloved William!

A Letter which came by this day's post for you and which I opened, was from your brother John, informing you that he and Mrs Kent are to leave Glasgow tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock and will be here by $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12—he adds 'I return upon Saturday or Sunday at farthest'.—It happened very unfortunate your being from Home, and I write to request you will return in the stage tomorrow as Mr Sommerville informs me you can,—I have prepared the best Bed for them, and engaged Mr & Mrs Maul to meet them here at Dinner tomorrow —have I done right?—Do come as soon as possible I conjure you, it will be dull for them without you particularly as Mrs Kent and your Eliza are entire strangers to each other. O! come and bless with your presence your affectionate wife,—how gloomy and tedious time passes with her in your absence, she delays telling, till reclined on your faithfull bosom,—on the other side I will transcribe your Brother's Letter or you would think this sudden movement strange.

I must (however reluctantly) bid adieu, in order to attend to my numerous avocations—you would have laughed to see the bustle I was [in] after I got the Letter, away I went (regardless of the snow that was thick falling) first to Mrs Maul, next to Mr Sommerville for a direction to you, and then to the market.

In the blissful hope of embracing the tenderest best of husbands by this time tomorrow

I remain
His dutiful and affectionate wife
Eliza Kent.

Source: Kent Papers, Letters to her husband William, MS A3966.8 (ML) vol. 2, pp. 23–142.



6 A Request for Money from Parramatta

The familiar theme of a begging letter gains pathos from the known facts of Parramatta life. Rose Hill was the granary, and numbers of convicts were packed into large huts flanking the road to Phillip's lathe-and-plaster Government House, where Macquarie's gracious Georgian home now stands. Life was brutal to a degree, and to each hut a woman prisoner was assigned, to cook and clean—officially. In fact, it is only to be hoped that the women assigned to this work were tough enough, and perhaps not averse to their all too probable role. We know nothing of this writer; but her finding someone in England with both influence and a desire to help her suggests some beauty or charm. Beyond this nothing has been traced of her life.

Her letter was published in the Dublin *Public Advertiser*, 14 June 1793, with editorial comment on the 'terrible distress' at Sydney being known to English authorities.

Parramatta, New South Wales
23rd November 1792

May it please you to excuse these few lines from an afflicted suppliant, who most humbly takes the liberty to acquaint you of her sad distress in this desolate place of banishment, which is very severe; principally occasioned by hardships and shortness of provisions. We have during my short stay here lost near 1,500 souls from these causes. The dearness of food and my poverty make me solicit your well-known goodness to grant me some small relief in money, committed to the care of Mr -----, the bearer hereof; and let me at the same time return you my sincere thankfulness for your kind promises before I left London.

Source: HRNSW vol. 2.



7 Elizabeth Macarthur Puts Down Roots

The Macarthurs had moved to Rose Hill in 1793, and settled at Elizabeth Farm, where Elizabeth was to spend most of her life. The indulgent Lt.-Governor, Major Francis Grose, Commanding Officer of the Rum Corps, made Macarthur, who was also paymaster of the troops (a position then recognised as leading to a quick fortune) the valuable gifts Elizabeth recorded. As these extracts show, she complacently accepted the Rum Corps' standards and views of policy, and it is interesting that, in spite of her many amiable qualities, she was not awakened to sympathy for such women, almost at her gate, as the writer of L. 6.

Extracts

21st December 1793

. . . The Major has also given us a grant of 100 acres of land on the banks of the river close to the town of Parramatta. It is some of the best ground that has been discovered, and ten men are allowed us for the purpose of clearing and cultivating it.

I have one more gift to speak of—it is a very fine cow in calf, of which I am very proud, and for this too we are indebted to Major Grose, and to a family in this country in its present situation it is a gift beyond any value that can be placed upon it.

1 September 1795

. . . This country possesses numerous advantages to persons holding appointments under Government. It seems the only part of the Globe where quiet is to be expected. We enjoy here one of the finest climates in the World. The necessaries of life are abundant, and a fruitful soil affords us many luxuries. Nothing induces me to wish to change but the difficulty of educating our children, and were it otherwise, it would be unjust towards them to confine them to so narrow a society. My desire is that they may see a little more of the world, and better learn to appreciate this retirement. Such as it is the little creatures all speak of going home to England with rapture . . . But hereafter I shall much wonder if some of them make not this place the object of their choice.

. . . The officers of this colony, with a few others possessed of money or credit in England, unite together and purchase the cargoes of such vessels as repair to this country from various quarters. Two or more are chosen from the number to bargain for the cargo offered for sale, which is then divided among them, in proportion to the amount of their subscriptions. This arrangement prevents monopoly, and the impositions that would otherwise [be] practised by masters of ships.

Source: Macarthur Onslow, *Macarthurs of Camden*, pp. 44, 46, 51.



8 *Samuel Marsden's Homesick Bride*

Elizabeth Marsden, *née* Fristan, wife of the blacksmith's apprentice who, for his piety and energy, was educated and appointed the second chaplain to New South Wales, introduces her own special thread to the tapestry of the religious community centred on Parramatta. She lived her Australian life on a purely personal, domestic basis. She never rose to the concept of a role for the clergyman's wife. This inner isolation makes her at first slightly unsympathetic; but as a developing character, responding to the Australian environment, she grows on one and rouses sympathy because



Elizabeth Marsden, *née* Fristan, in her wedding dress, Hull 1793, by courtesy of Professor Yarwood and the Librarian, Pudsey Municipal Library, Leeds (from the Gaunt Collection).



Mrs Marsden in old age, by courtesy of Rev R.E. Marsden, sometime vicar of Pendeen.

she is articulate on the traumas of the expatriate. At first, as in these letters to her friend Mrs Stokes, she is merely homesick; later she speaks with the voice of all those who were aware of the deeply alien quality of the Australian environment.

Richard Johnson, who had arrived as Chaplain with the First Fleet, was stationed in Sydney but, before Marsden's arrival, had also held regular services in Parramatta.

Parramatta, December 13th 1794

Dear Madam,

I am convinced you will receive with peculiar satisfaction the information of our safe arrival in New South Wales. I shall not soon forget your kind attention and civility shown to me in London, tho' transported to this distant part of the universe. I have met with nothing so bad as we might have expected before we sailed from England. Since we arrived in this colony we have been very provided with all the common necessities of life. The climate is fine, and healthy, and agrees very well with my constitution. I have not suffered one single day of sickness since we came here. The country is very romantic, beautifully formed by nature, and will be most delightful when it becomes a little more opened. It abounds with beautiful shrubs and Ferns of various kinds. We are settled at Parramatta, about 14 miles distant from Sydney, where M'. Johnson resides. There is a fine river, which runs up from Sydney to Parramatta, and boats continually passing to and fro, so that we can easily visit each other. I have one companion at Parramatta, the commanding officer's wife, (M^m. Mac arthur) a very pleasant agreeable lady, mother of three fine children. At Sydney there are several ladies, so that we have some respectable society. Upon the whole, my situation is far more comfortable than I expected to find.

I experience a great loss of religious society. Our general Conversation in Company is very different from what I have been accustomed to in England, it all turns upon worldly affairs. Religion is seldom a subject of Conversation (excepting to edify its doctrines or professions), never to edify one another*. There appears (humanly speaking) little prospect of doing good. However I do not despair for the work is not man's but the Lord's. I trust we are not forgotten at a throne of grace by the faithful in England. The Lord had some grand design in sending His gospel to this dark benighted part of the world. And therefore this consideration sh^d. resign us to His dispensations who worketh all things after the counsel of His will.

You would hear by Miss Amey that I got a daughter off the South Cape of New Holland: the Lord preserved us both in a wonderful manner, and by good nursing of M^m. Johnson we both of us soon recovered the fatigues of a storm, she is now nine months old, and a very healthy child. M'. M joins with me in best respects to M'. Stokes and family.

I am, dear Madam, yours
Eliza Marsden.

Please to tell Edward that the Melon-seed he gave me is now growing upon Kingston's Farm; I should be happy if he could partake of them when ripe.

(Received July 29th, 1795)

* What exactly she meant by 'edifying' is not clear, unless Mrs Hassall's letter to Mrs Nott (L. 36) is an example.

Some part of Mrs Marsden starves in New South Wales

Parramatta New South Wales
May 1st 1796

Dear Madam,

Your kind favour dated March 10th 1795 we received November 6th 95, but find myself at a loss in what manner to express myself: your good wishes & kind remembrance merit my warmest gratitude, & that is the only tribute I can pay your goodness—I long for an opportunity of conversing with you face to face. This would enable me to open my mind more fully than I can do with paper & ink; but whether I shall ever be indulged with that privilege or no, is still in the dark womb of Providence. We seem in our present situation to be almost totally cut off from all connection with the world, especially the virtuous part of it. Old England is no more than like a pleasing dream; when I think of it, it appears to have no existence but in my own imagination. I feel as if I had once converse with friends united in love by the same Spirit; some faint remembrance of those pleasures still remains, & I cannot but flatter myself with some distant hope that it will again be with me as in months past—Had we only a few pious friends to pass away an hour with it would render this colony more tolerable—The want of a place for public worship is still to be regretted. We have not one at Parramatta, nor any likely to be. So little attention being paid to the Ministers makes religion appear contemptible: some times M^r. Marsden preaches in a convicts' hut; sometimes in a place appropriated for corn; & at times does not know where he is to perform it—which often makes him quite uneasy, & puts him out of temper both with the place and people. With respect to myself I enjoy both my health & spirits pretty well, equally as well as when in England.

I thank you for kind attention to my daughter; the book you sent her I hope she will live to benefit by. She now can talk pretty well & is an entertaining companion to a fond Mother whose feelings you will readily excuse. I have also a little native boy who takes up part of my attention—He is about six years old & now begins to read English & wait at table, & hope at some future period he may be a useful member of society. He has no inclination to go among the natives, & has quite forgot their manners.

Present my best respects to M^r. Stokes, Miss Stokes, & Master Edward, & tell him we often talk of him when we are eating melons, the seeds of which he was so kind as to give me with wishing you every blessing in this life, I remain dear Madam Y^r.,

Eliza Marsden.

M^r. M. gives you a line, but two ships sail together—we divide the letters.

(Received May 14th 1797)

Source: George Mackaness (ed.), *Some Private Correspondence of the Rev. Samuel Marsden and Family, 1744–1824*, Australian Historical Monographs, vol. XII (N.S.)



9 The Rev. Richard Cobbold Introduces Margaret Catchpole

Among the few entries on women in the early volumes of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, two are linked by the popular and long-held belief that they had both been transported for horse-stealing. They are the origin of the legend of the Beautiful Innocent Convict Maid—true in Mary Reibey's case, false for Margaret Catchpole—still so beloved of romantic novelists and journalists. Much of the muddle is the work of a Victorian clergyman, the Rev. Richard Cobbold, whose version of a female convict's life, *The History of Margaret Catchpole, A Suffolk Girl*, is still in print and still found in many Australian public libraries. Anyone reading it should be made aware of the facts. The real woman, a sensible and capable Suffolk girl with a way with horses, worked as laundry maid then nursemaid and housekeeper for a Mrs Cobbold, who grew fond of her, taught her to read and write, and dismissed her only when Margaret refused to give up a notorious local smuggler with whom she was in love. For his sake, she stole a valuable Cobbold horse. She was caught, tried, condemned to death, reprieved, and imprisoned in the same jail as her lover. An escape attempt meant renewed condemnation, but the sentence was commuted to transportation for life. In these extracts, in his own matchless prose, the Rev. Cobbold presents his version of events which occurred about the time of his birth.

For the real Margaret Catchpole, see LL. 12, 14, 27 and 30.

The first letter is to Mrs Cobbold; the second, to Margaret's family (her uncle and aunt).

Extracts

July 6th 1797

Honourable Madam,

By the time you read this, which I expect will be at your happy breakfast table tomorrow morning, your poor servant will be at Bury, awaiting the awful moment of her condemnation . . .

My dear Uncle,

This will reach you tomorrow before you leave Bury. Give my love and best thanks to my aunt and friends who spoke this day in behalf of your unhappy niece; but when you arrive at Ipswich, be sure to call and thank that dear old gentleman, Doctor Stebbing. I know he feels very much for me: but tell him not to distress himself, as if I were to be lost for ever. Tell him, I hope to see him in a better world . . . I wish you and my aunt to come to Ipswich and see me once more before I suffer. Tell my aunt I wish her to purchase something decent for my funeral . . . I wish my bones to lie beside my mother's and my sister's, in Nacton churchyard. I am told that on Saturday week I shall probably suffer death. God grant I may then be prepared . . .

Bury Gaol, August 9th, 1797.

Source: Richard Cobbold, *The History of Margaret Catchpole, A Suffolk Girl* (London, 1846; Ipswich (Eng.) 1971), vol. 2, p. 280.

March 26, 1800.



ESCAPED

From the COUNTY GOAL, at IPSWICH, last Night, or early
this Morning,---

Margaret Catchpole,

A CONVICT,

Under Sentence of Transportation, for

FELONY, AND HORSE-STEALING.

She is about 38 Years of Age, Swarthy Complexion,--very dark Eyes and Hair,--hard favoured ... About 5 Feet 2 Inches high, and escaped in a *Convict's Dress*, which she has, probably, changed, and may be disguised in *Men's Apparel*.

WHOEVER SHALL APPREHEND THE SAID

Margaret Catchpole,

SO AS SHE MAY BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE,

Will be entitled to a Reward of

TWENTY POUNDS,

Granted by Act of Parliament.

Printed by RUSSELL, Bookseller, Dealer, & Stationer, in the CIRCULATING LIBRARY, Ticonic Street.

Notice of Margaret Catchpole's escape, 1800, by courtesy of the Mitchell Library.

10 *Sarah Bird Begins her New life*

Sarah's letter to her father is confirmation of Margaret Catchpole's later account of the possibility of a normal life for a sensible woman convict; but Sarah adds a more definite early Australian colour. She had been a domestic servant, caught stealing from a trusting employer, and was sentenced to transportation at the Old Bailey in July 1794. She was 24. On the voyage she found a protector to provide a comfortable future. He was probably a ship's officer who saw in the unsentimental and shrewd young woman a good specimen of the usefully employed Sydney 'washer-woman': a convict woman, *de facto* wife, or purely commercial partner to take charge of the profitable enterprises banned to an officer. There is no other explanation of her letter, since no convict could have gone ashore and made the purchases she listed; still less would she have known how to deal with them. Later, she did not abide by her resolution of chastity. In March 1804 the *Sydney Gazette* reported that she was almost killed and permanently crippled by a former lover. By 1813 she was shown on the Mutch Index of Convict Indents and Musters as living with a daughter of the same name in Parramatta. Later she held a liquor licence.

This letter was probably drafted (though there is later evidence that she could read) by the protector and taken by him to England and preserved. It was published in *The True Briton* (10 November 1798), whose editor added, 'Letter of a woman lately transported to Botany Bay to her father'.

I take the first opportunity of informing you of my safe arrival in this remote quarter of the globe after a pretty good passage of six months. Since my arrival I have purchased a house, for which I gave £20, and the following articles, which are three turkies, at 15s. each; three sucking-pigs, at 10s.; a pair of pigeons, at 8s.; a yard-dog, £2; two muscovy ducks, at 10s. each; three English ducks, at 5s. each; and a goat, five guineas; six geese, at 15s. each. I have got a large garden to the house, and a licence. The sign is 'The Three Jolly Settlers'. I have met with tolerable good success in the public line. I did a little trade in the passage here in a number of small articles, such as sugar, tea, tobacco, thread, snuff, needles, and every thing that I could get anything by. The needles are a shilling a paper here, and fine thread is sixpence a skein. I have sold my petticoats at two guineas each, and my long black cloak at ten guineas, which shews that black silk sells well here; the edging that I gave 1s. 8d. per yard for in England, I got 5s. for it here. I have sold all the worst of my cloaths, as wearing apparel brings a good price. I bought a roll of tobacco at Rio Janeiro, of 54 lb. weight, which cost me 20s., which I was cheated out of; I could have got 12s. a pound for it here. I likewise bought a cwt. of sugar there, and also many other articles. Rum sells for 1s. 6d. per gallon there, and here, at times, £2. Any person coming from England with a few hundred pounds laid out at any of the ports that shipping touch at coming here are liable to make a fortune. Shoes that cost 4s. or 5s. a pair in England will bring from 10s. to 15s. here. On our passage here we buried only two women and two children. The climate is very healthful and likewise very fertile, as there are two crops a year of almost everything; and I really believe with the assistance of God, by the time that I have paid the forfeit, according

to the laws of my country, I shall acquire a little money to return home with, which I have not the smallest doubt of, and be a comfort to you at the latter end of your days. Any person that should have a mind to come out here as a settler, by applying at the Secretary of State's Office, may have a free passage, and likewise two men and a farm here, which is a great encouragement. I should be very glad to hear from you the first opportunity. I live by myself, and do not as the rest of the women did on the passage, which was, every one of them that could had a husband. I shall conclude with giving my kind love to my brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, so am, dear father, your ever dutiful, loving, and affectionate daughter till death,

S.B.

Source: HRNSW vol. 3, pp. 509–10, reprinted from *The True Briton*, 10 Nov. 1798.



11 *The Anxious Mrs Paterson*

Her portrait shows Elizabeth Paterson as a strong, mature woman, her features chiselled into lines of both patience and repose. From the time of her marriage to William Paterson—naturalist, Rum Corps officer, alcoholic, and ranking officer towards the end of the Rum Rebellion—her life was a series of crises. When she wrote this letter, to her uncle in Liverpool, she had come a long way from the ‘cosy Scotch lass’ Lt. Ralph Clark of the Marines admired on her arrival in 1791—see his Journal on the *Friendship*. Now she was afraid, and with cause. The colony changed in 1799 when the transports landed the bitter betrayed ‘rebels’ of the crushed Irish Rebellion of 1798. Elizabeth was the first woman to express a sense of insecurity, and the growing disturbances, and the full rising of April 1804, proved how discerning she had been.

Mrs Paterson was many-sided. She shared in her husband’s work in plant acclimatisation, and in Mrs King’s hopes for the Female Orphan School; and she showed unusual perception in judging the future importance of the wool from the first merino sheep.

Port Jackson 3d Oct. 1800

My Dear Uncle

H.M. Ship Buffalo, returning to Europe with Governor Hunter, gives me an opportunity of writing again to you and I should be happy if it was in my power to send you information that would be satisfactory on our account, but we certainly are at present nearly as uncomfortable and harass’d as the People in Ireland were at the time of the Rebellion,—owing to the late importation of united Irishmen into this country for these last six months



Elizabeth (Mrs William Paterson), by William Owen (n.d.), by courtesy of the Mitchell Library.

we have been under some apprehensions, but Governor Hunter, disbelieving their intentions took no steps to prevent their designs, until last Sunday which was the day fixed upon for the Destruction of the military and the private familys at Parramatta, a considerable settlement fifteen miles from this,—the alarm being given prevented their meeting, and thirty of the most desperate were taken up, and on examination confessed the whole Plot; they are now in confinement with their Priest, a crafty villain, who was no doubt the sole command of these bigotted creatures—an attempt to release him has been some time expected, which the military and Loyal Associations, would not be sorry for.—But I have no idea myself that they will ever appear in numbers or in noonday—my terror is private assassins breaking into our houses in the dead of the night—in which they were but too successful in their own country—Government I trust as they have now sent them will take some steps for our protection, either by sending more Forces, or stationing a man of war, as a guard ship in the Harbour, as on the departure of the Buffalo we are left without any ship whatever so that we are cut off from all communication with any part of the World.

Governor King who now has the command, will make many regulations for the security, as far as in his power, of the Colony—and likewise some attention to the rising generation, to which hitherto none has been paid, for certainly if we ever hope for worth or honesty in this settlement, we must look to them for it, and not the present degenerate mortals—a school is now established on a very extensive plan, for the reception of all orphans, and other children whose parents are not proper for such a charge, under the management of the Governor and a committee—these children are to be entirely secluded from the other people—and brought up in habits of religion and industry—some branches of manufactures will be by means of this seminary put on foot particularly linnen and woollen cloths the latter to be procured from the Fleece of a remarkably fine breed of Spanish sheep already in the Colony—and the former from the Flax which grows spontaneously in the Woods, this with their education and the Boys learning different trades, and the Girls Housewifery and the use of the needle, will be full employment. This arrangement gives me great satisfaction—as there are now above a thousand children in the place. I cannot help looking forward to the time when the young men will become useful members of Society and the Women faithful and industrious wives. Everyone must hope for our success in so laudable an undertaking—and if no material interruption takes place—we shall soon have it on a permanent establishment—I hope when an opportunity offers to hear from you—it is now fifteen months since we left England, and I have not heard from any Friend I have—Col. Paterson's whole time is totally taken up with his two capacities, particularly under the present circumstances, either hearing evidence, or in the Field with the men, and I am often lonely enough, and sometimes perhaps fancy things worse than they are—but however with respect to my Dear Sister I am always easy, under your protection I can have no fear.—I have now only to add Col. Paterson's best respects. If anything more happens before the sailing of the ship I will mention it to my sister.

Believe me, my Dear Uncle,
your affectionate niece
E. Paterson

Source: Letter to her Uncle, Lt. Johnson (ML). Details of the Irish conspiracies are to be found in *HRA* 1, 2 and J. Waldersee, *Catholic Society in New South Wales 1788–1860*, (Sydney, 1974).

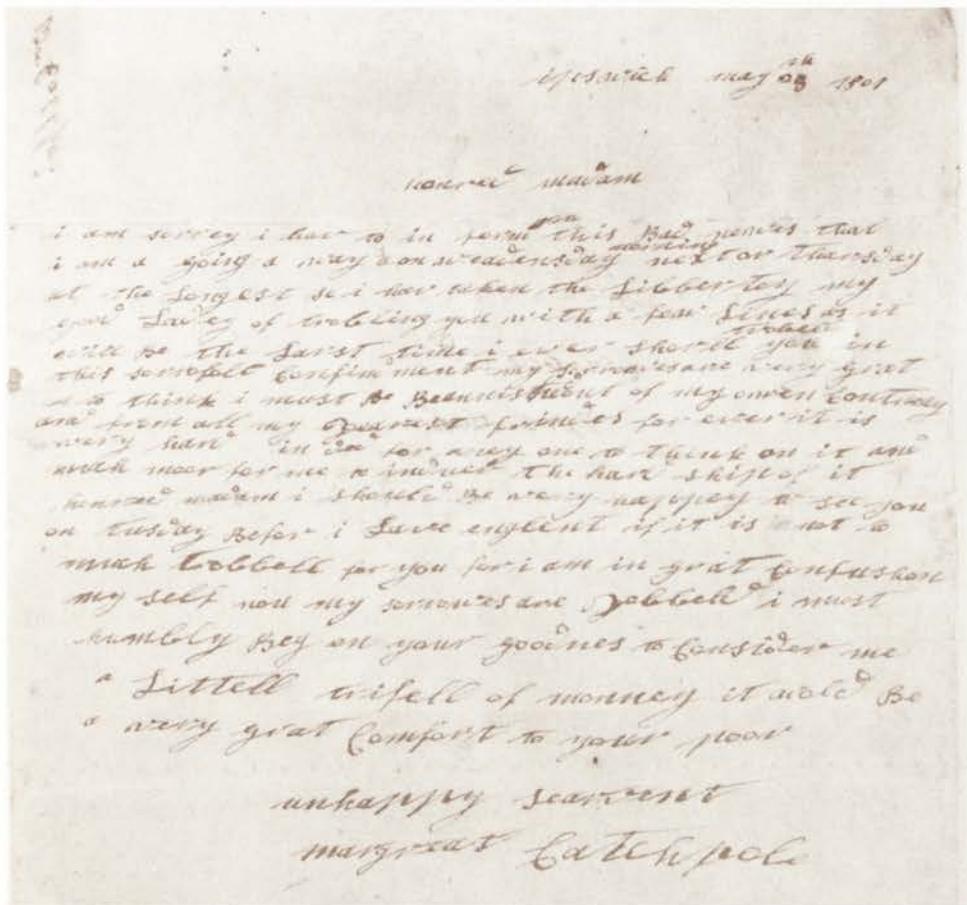


12 Enter the Real Margaret Catchpole

In May 1801 Margaret learnt what her final sentence was to be, and in this, the first letter which has come down unaltered in form, she tells Mrs Cobbold, her former employer, the news. Mrs Cobbold visited her on the 26th, and on the 27th Margaret was taken to Portsmouth for embarkation on the transport *Nile*, which carried one or two migrant families as well as the convicts.



Margaret Catchpole, 1798. Sketch by Rev Richard Cobbold, from *The History of Margaret Catchpole, A Suffolk Girl* (1848) by courtesy of the Ancient Bookshop, Ipswich.



Holograph letter by Margaret Catchpole, from Ipswich gaol, 1801, by courtesy of the Ipswich Museum.

Ipswich may 25th 1801

honred madam

i am sorry i have to inform you this bad newes that i am going a way on wednesday next or thursday at the longest so i hav taken the libberty my good Ladie of troubling you with a few Lines as it will be the Larst time i ever Shall trouble you in this Sorrofull Confinement my sorrows are very grat to think i must be Bannished out of my owen Countrey and from all my Dearest friends for ever it is very hard indeud for anyone to think on it and much moor for me to enduer the hardship of it honred madam i should Be very happy to see you on tusday Befor I Lave England if it is notto much trobbell for yoy for i am in grat Confushion my self now my sorrowes are Dobbeld i must humbly Beg on Your Goodness to Consider me a Littell trifell of monney it wold Be a very great Comfort to your poor unhappy searvent

margreat Catchpole

Source: Copy of original in Ipswich Museum Library in Mitchell Library.

13 *An Elderly Pioneer has Qualms before Sailing*

Because of difficulties in obtaining permission to quote the typescript in the Mitchell Library, where it may be seen among the Matcham Letters, a summary has been included.

Mary Pitt, a widow with a grown family, related by marriage to 'Mr Nelson' (later Admiral Lord Nelson) obtained a recommendation from him to Governor Hunter, a former shipmate, for a land grant in New South Wales.

On shipboard, waiting their departure, she wrote her cousin George Matcham two letters, the first on 31 May 1801, the second a few weeks later.

She was deeply depressed, and afraid. Conditions on the crowded vessel, which carried 160 convicts, their guard of soldiers, and nearly forty passengers, were more than overcrowded. Even the captain, who was taking his wife on the voyage, had had to give up half his cabin.

The Pitts were naturally worse off. Mary regarded her cabin as a 'little hole here among all sorts of people' and it was so dark that she could hardly see to write. Outside, it was no better: 'we have only just room to creep out of our little nests'. Their cabins were next to the store room and the cabin used by the surgeon, and people were continually tramping past. Fortunately the captain managed to improve their living conditions.

But at least at first, she had a deeper anxiety, and she was filled with dread. A fellow passenger, who knew the colony, had told her it was full of corrupt, wicked people. The idea of the future made her incoherent, and she could only fall back on her faith that a merciful creator would support her through any poverty they might have to suffer and would keep her out of the hands of wicked people. She did not expect to live long, but hoped that Mr Matcham's influence would make the Governor a friend to her children; she wished every blessing for her cousin, his wife and mother, and, for herself, trusted that God would be her Guide, and send her to a place of rest. She signed herself Matcham's obliged humble servant.

Her prayers were answered, and prosperity justified her uprooting. Her sons succeeded and her daughters married well.

Source: Typescript of letters in Matcham Papers (AM 166, ML).



14 Margaret Catchpole from her 'Place of Banishment'

The series of Margaret Catchpole's Australian letters which exists for the years 1802-11 gives by far the best picture of colonial life as seen by a humble, sensible and mature woman. There were rules—and she kept them. Privileges could make life easier; loyal service brought rewards.

Margaret was at once employed by the Commissary, John Palmer, as cook, and taken off the list of those 'On the Stores' (i.e. receiving rations).

The first of these letters is to Mrs Cobbold; the others to Dr Stebbing, her early protector.

The language has been modernised, because the contents are too interesting to risk their being obscured by the difficulty of making out the text.

Extracts

Sydney, Jan th 21 1802

Honoured Madam,

With great pleasure I take up my pen to acquaint you, my good lady, of my safe arrival at Port Jackson, New South Wales, Sydney on the 20 day of December 1801 and as I was a-going to be landed on the left hand of me it put me in mind of the Cliff, both the houses and likewise the hills so as it put me in very good spirits, seeing a place so very like my own native home, it is a great deal more like England than ever I expected to have seen for here is garden stuff of all kinds except gooseberries and currants and apples; the gardens are very beautiful all planted with geraniums and they run 7 and 8 foot high. It is a very woody country for if I go out any distance here it means going through woods for miles. But they are very beautiful and very pretty birds I only wish my good lady I could send you one of these parrots for they are very beautiful but I see so many die on board it makes me so very unwilling to send you one, but if I should continue long in this country I certainly will send you something out of this wicked country for I must say this is the wickedest place I ever was in [in] all my life. The wheat harvest was almost over just as I landed. Here wheat is 8 shillings per bushell. At this time here is 2 crops in the summer, one with wheat and one with Indian corn. The winter is but very short as they tell me. Madam, I cannot give you much account of the country in this letter But I will give you more in the next for I never shall forget your goodness, my good lady, [that] you shewed to me before I left England and I took everything over with me safe and it is a great service to me indeed, not that I am in such great trouble at present. But God only knows how it might be for here is many a one that has been here for many years and they have their poor head shaved and sent up to the Coal River and there carry coals from day-light in the morning, till dark at night, and half starved. But I hear that [it] is going to be put by and so it had need for it is very cruel indeed. Norfolk Island is a bad place enough to send any poor creature with [a] steel collar on their poor necks. But I will take good care of myself from that. I am pretty well off at present for I was taken off the stores 2 days after I landed so I have no government work to do and they have nothing to do with me except when here be a general muster then I must appear to let them know I am here and if I have a mind to go up to Parramatta (twenty miles) or Toongabbie (30) or Hawkesberry, I have to get a pass, or else I should be taken up and put into prison, for a very little will do that here. My dear good lady I want to say a great deal more but time will not permit for I expect the ship every day and I have been very bad since I came

on shore I thought I should lose my life but bless be to the Lord I am a great deal better and I was charmingly all my passage considering we crossed over the Bay of Biscay and crossed the Line very well indeed but I was tossed about very much indeed but I should not have minded if I was but coming to Old England once more for I cannot say that I like this country, no, never shall. The governor has a good many calves and another gentleman here, a great many horses, and very small [?] wiskes and little shay [? chaise] carts and passenger boats. My dear madam, I must conclude and send you more accounts the next time.

from your unfortunate servant
Margaret Catchpole.

Madam, pray be so kind as to let Dr Stebbens [*sic*] have that side of the letter, I hope these few scrawls will find you and all your good family well and I hope, my good lady, you will write to the first transport ship that comes out for I shall be very [glad] to hear from you.

Dear Sir,

the blacks, the natives of this place killed and wounded 8 men and women and children—one man they cut off his arms half way up and broke the bones that they left on very much and cut off their legs up to their knees and the poor man was carried into the hospital alive but the governor have sent men out after them to shot every 1 they find, so as I hope I shall give you a better account the [indecipherable]

Dear Sir,

this is to acquaint you of our safe landing at Sydney on 20 day December, and we were all well. Barker is alive, but she was very much frightened at the roughness of the sea, she used very often to cry out. 'I wish I was with my dear Mr Stebbens for I never shall see Ipswich no more' but she is much the same as ever, and Elizabeth Collett lives very near to me and does very well, and she is off the stores so we are not [? kept about] work for government like [? horses], we are free from all hard work. Sarah Barker has to spin for government and she is upon the stores, but she can get her work done by 12 or 1 o'clock if she works hard at it.

Sir, I pray, give my best respects to all my old fellow prisoners and tell them never to [? be] down hearted at the thought of coming to Botany Bay, for it is likely you may never see it is not inhabited only by the blacks, the natives of this place, they are very saucy for they always carry with them spears and tommyhawks so when they can meet with a white man they will rob them and spear them. I for my part, I do not like them, and I do not know how to look at them, they are such poor naked creatures. They behave themselves well enough when they come into our house for if not we would get them punished. They very often have a grand fight with themselves, 20 and 30 altogether, and we may be sure some of them are killed. There is nothing said to them for killing one another.

Sir

I will write more about the country when I write again. Tea is 29 s. to 20 and 15 shilling, sugar 2 shillings to 18 and 15 pence per pound, salt beef 1 shilling per pound, mutton 2 ss. per pound; fifteen shillings for a pair of shoes, 10 d. for a pair of stockings, five shillings for a yard of common print, 3 d. for a yard of calico, 3 shillings for a pound of soap, six pence per

pound for onions, 2 pence per [pound] for potatoes, sixpence for a cabbage, five shillings for a quart bottle of rum, 2 shillings for a quart of porter, 1 and 3 pence per pound for salt pork. Fish is as cheap as anything we can buy, but we have no money to trade with here.

Pray, my good sir, remember me to Mrs Winshaw, and tell her here is one of Mr Winshaw's own daughters living up in the country but I have not seen her not yet.

Sir,

I hope you will be so kind as to write to me by the first ship that comes to Botany Bay and direct for me at Samuel Rolley in the Brickfields, No. 40 Sydney.

Sir we had not one died no, not all the passage out, in so many women.

The crops of wheat is very good in this country for it produces fourteen bushells per acre, it is a very fruitful place indeed for I understand them that never had a child in all their lives have some after they come here.

Pray Sir, send me word if you know how Dinah Parker and her child is.

Source: A1508 (ML); *see also* L. 12.



15 *Like a Great Tiger . . .*

In the same year in which Margaret Catchpole wrote her sober chronicle (L. 14), a convict woman of a very different type, Ann Robinson, created an unforgettable picture of one of the colony's picturesque figures, D'Arcy Wentworth, later principal surgeon at the general hospital, and father of William Charles, explorer, journalist and later statesman.

Though four times charged as a highwayman—he was acquitted three times and discharged for lack of evidence once, thus apparently through family influence narrowly escaping transportation as a convicted felon—he arrived in the colony on the official side of the social line. However, his lusty and complicated relations with women helped to blur his position and made him unwelcome to the 'Establishment' wives (except Mrs King —see L. 18).

Probably the fiery Ann was, or aspired to be, one of the comet's tail of women, high and low, bond and free, who followed his rise to considerable wealth and power. If so, it was an association that certainly went sour. Little is known of her beyond this enchanting outburst, the outcome of which is not on record. The Mutch Indexes record an Ann Smith holding a liquor licence and later farms, but there was another Mrs Ann Robinson and it is hard to be sure to whom reference is made.

This outburst is almost certainly the work of an amanuensis.

To His Excellency Philip Gidley King Esq—Captain General Governer in Chief over His Majesty's Territory of New South Wales & its Dependencies

etc etc etc

Ann Robinson

Most humbly Begs Leave

To acquaint you & in what Manner I am served concerning that House at Parramatta.

I always had leave from Mr Cresley* To Sell that house to the best advantage & over and above the Money which I had upon it should be mine he wanted no more.

At this present time the House & Farm can be sold for £200 . . . Wentworth Stops the sale of it and will sell it the 12th Janry next by Publick Auction if he is suffered to do that it will be sold at a very low price.

Wentworth behaved very Ill to me last June I could have sold as many Trees of the ground at the Farm & House in Parramatta as would nearly have paid Mr Cresley the Premises would still have been mine. Wentworth came to the House Parramatta when I was at Sydney Last June threatened two men at the House very much told them he would have them put on the store & Flogged and as for me he would have Transported and Bauled out about the Gardens and house & in the street like a great Tiger.

Humbly Begs Your Excellency will not suffer this Tiger to do as he Pleases Appearantly he wants to Destress me as much as Cresley.

Trusting therefore

To Your Excellency impartial Judgement & Humbly implores such redress as in Your wisdom, this Case may seem to merit

Shall be in duty Bound ever to pray,

Etc

* The 'Mr Cresley' she mentions is probably George Crossley, the convict lawyer.

Source: King Papers, Correspondence vol. 1 (1799–1829).



16 *Eliza Kent Joins the Rush for Exotic Birds*

Among the unmentioned victims of the early colony, native fauna ranked high, there being all too frequent references to the premature deaths of various kinds of birds and small animals. Black swans made acceptable *douceurs* to the wives of noblemen with influence on the colony's government. Eliza's gifts were at least for relatives.

In 1803 Eliza had accompanied her husband, Captain of the *Buffalo*, on a trip to India and back by Malaya and the East Indies, where apparently she collected some of the exotic birds she mentions.

Extracts

23 September

Anchored in Anjer Roads

—I have made a purchase of a small white cockatoo with a yellow Crest—it is perfectly tame—talks Malay—dances—whistles—barks—crows—in short imitates anything and is altogether the most entertaining Bird I ever met with—I am hourly wishing I could transport it to Lewisham, it would afford the dear Girls a fund of amusement . . .

—Poultry we procured in abundance at a very low price, and a hundred Pine Apples for a Spanish Dollar—Peacock Tails—and figured Mats were likewise cheap.—This place afforded me an opportunity of making a valuable addition to my Aviary—I have not less than twenty p'. of Birds—affording a beautiful variety.—I dont recollect having mentioned my New Guinea Pigeons—they are nearly as large as Turkeys—of a slate colour, with a crest of gauze feathers shaped like a Fan—some inches high—the Iris of the Eyes a bright Vermillion.—but according to my ideas of beauty in the feathered race—two p'. of small Paroquets from Java bear away the palm—On the top of their heads is a spot of the finest purple, on their breasts another of crimson—on the back of their necks—one of deep yellow—and their tails red—the rest of their feathers a lively green—these Birds / the only ones of their kind in the ship / are the property of my Brother and Me, and we shall not fail using our endeavours to preserve them alive—Mathews are intended for *Mary*—mine for *Elvira*.—

Source: The *Buffalo* Journal, Kent Papers. MS. A3968, vol. IV: Mrs Kent's Journal written in the form of letters to her mother, 13 May–13 October 1803.



17 Mrs Macarthur Tells Piper of the Irish Rising

Both Elizabeth Marsden and Elizabeth Macarthur wrote their versions of the rising of the croppies (the Irish prisoners) to Captain John Piper, Commandant at Norfolk Island. Mrs Macarthur's was the more vivid and interesting, which was natural, since hers had been the more active part and the greater danger. Her elder children were in England, as was her husband as a result of his duel with his commanding officer, William Paterson (later Lt. Governor after the deposition of Governor Bligh), and the rebels, knowing her popularity with the soldiers of the garrison, had planned burning Elizabeth Farm to create a diversion. She obviously had not shared Mrs Paterson's apprehensions (L. 11).

Mrs Marsden's role was further diminished by the fact that her husband, knowing his unpopularity with the Irish prisoners, wisely avoided danger by retiring to Sydney with the women and children. The servant Joice, probably an assigned prisoner, seems to have been sincerely attached to his employers.

Extract

15 April 1804

. . . We had a fortunate escape. On the Friday that they rose I drank tea with Mary and James* at Mr Marsden's not knowing that anything was apprehended. About 5 o'clock when we were sitting at supper our servant burst into the Parlour Pale & in violent agitation. 'Sir', says he, looking wildly at Mr Marsden, 'Come with me, and you too Madam', looking at me. Then half shutting the door he told us that the Croppies had risen, that they were at my Seven Hills Farm & that numbers were approaching Parramatta. M^r. Marsden, myself and the children repaired to the Barracks. We then learnt that Castle Hill was in flames. The fire was discernible from Parramatta. It was recommended that as many Ladies as chose should go to Sydney, as constant intelligence was brought into the Barracks of the near approach of the Irishmen who were expected every minute to enter the Town. The number reported to be 300. Mrs Williamson, Mrs Abbott,† Mrs Marsden, myself and all our children took leave of our few friends and about eleven at night departed for Sydney.

The Irishmen were at that moment at the Park Gate—making hideous shouts & waiting as was afterwards found out, only for the signal of *Two Fires* in the Town, to make their descent and destroy or take it. One of those fires was to have been my House or some part of the Premises—This as was afterwards confessed was artfully contrived to catch the attention of the soldiery. The Rebels saw that the consideration of my lonely situation and the attachment the soldiers had to my family would induce them upon seeing the Fire, to repair instantly to my relief—and the Barracks would then be easily secured to themselves. The other fire was to be a thatched hut in the *Town*. Thank God all was happily prevented.

We arrived in Sydney about 3 o'clock in the morning. The Town was all in arms—The marines from the Calcutta disembarked & a great number of the sailors armed. The Calcutta was beautifully lighted up. Most of the officers were on shore and kindly received us, poor fugitives, at the wharf. We had determined to take up our abode at Mr Marsden's house, excepting only Mrs Williamson, who went to Mr Campbell's.‡ To this house we and our little frightened sleepy tribe were escorted & civilities were poured in upon us from every quarter . . .

* Mary and James and William (perhaps too young to be a guest) were the younger Macarthur children.

† Mrs Williamson, wife of the Deputy Commissary at Parramatta; Mrs Abbott, wife of Edward Abbott of the Rum Corps.

‡ Mr Campbell, Robert Campbell, merchant.

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 3.



18 *Another Side to D'Arcy Wentworth*

This artless note throws light on two early personalities. Mrs King, in her many kindnesses, concealed as best she could the harsher side of her life with her husband, the pain-racked and almost insanely bad-tempered Governor. She was at times herself in need of comfort, and received it from both John Piper and Surgeon D'Arcy Wentworth. Wentworth, among the most complex characters of the early settlement, was adept at treading the tightrope between worlds. In England he was a medical student, scion of the powerful Irish aristocratic family of Fitzwilliam, descendants of the Earl of Strafford, and highwayman. To escape the consequences of this accusation he had himself enrolled as surgeon in the Rum Corps. In Sydney he was an army officer, shrewd business man, and womaniser;* yet he had time for little gracious acts like this one, so welcome to Anna Josefa King.

Sydney July the 18th 1804

Dear Sir,

By Mrs Wilson I had the pleasure of receiving your kind letter with a very *pretty bonnet*, for which I am under great obligation to you for the trouble you have taken to procure it, so *Exactly to my Choice*—I have always experienced your kind attention to *me and mine*, notwithstanding the duplicity of your friend Mr Balmain. Yet you have not better wellwishers for your prosperity than King & myself—had you even chosen to show me the letter you received from Mr Balmain—I would have convinced you of his Double Heart. However, poor man, he had paid the Debt we must all expect to pay, sooner or later, therefore it is wrong in me, to speak ill of the Dead.†

By the Lady Nelson I had the pleasure of receiving a neat little Bonnet from you, to Elizabeth. She requests me to return you her *thanks* for your *kind present*.

I have settled with Mr Long for the 84 gallons of spirit—that has been so long unsettled on Mr Balmain's account I am not quite sure of the number of gallons whether 64 or 54 not being able to find the accts—Lord‡ is to send it to you

Wishing you your Health
I beg to remain, Dear Sir,
Your much obliged
A.J. King

* D'Arcy Wentworth's headstone in Parramatta cemetery and the ADB 2 set out the complicated family affairs of both father and son and the father's children by various mothers.

† Mrs King may have been referring to a belief held by some officers and mentioned by the First Fleet surgeon Considen that King had deflected some of Balmain's Australian property from Balmain's family to his own use.

‡ Simeon Lord, the emancipist merchant.



19 Eliza Kent to Piper on Norfolk Island

After returning from the East Indies trip (see LL. 5, 16), the *Buffalo* was employed to transport officials, convicts and supplies between the settlements, now grown to three by David Collins's small group at Port Dalrymple (later Launceston). Piper was to remain on Norfolk Island from early in 1804 until 1810, thus escaping involvement in the Rum Rebellion.

Parramatta New South Wales
September th 28th 1804

Dear Sir

I have much pleasure in availing myself of the first opportunity that offers since the receipt of your Letters to Mrs McArthur and Mrs Marsden to return my acknowledgements for your kind remembrances—and to assure you Captⁿ Kent and myself were much disappointed on returning to Port Jackson to find you had left it.

The *Buffalo* is under sailing orders for Dalrymple and I believe there is a probability of her extending her voyage to Norfolk Island—permit me to say your being a resident there is a great inducement to my visiting the Island exclusive of the temptation you hold out, my 'Dancing down the Government House to Lansdowne Place', but really these long voyages have had such an effect upon my health that for some time to come (however unwillingly) I must relinquish them—Our Passage from Calcutta was rendered extremely pleasant by the society of two gentlemen whom I have the pleasure of introducing to your acquaintance, Mr Sherrer and Mr Sanders—as their stay at Norfolk will be very short, if you could assist them in procuring some Tropic Feathers, I should consider myself obliged—if there is anything Captⁿ Kent or myself can do for you here, we beg you will command us—in the meantime accept our best wishes and believe me, my Dear Sir

Yours very sincerely
Eliza Kent.

P.S. By the last vessel from Norfolk I had a letter from Daveron* requesting that I would make intercession for him—being a stranger to the nature of his offences I can only state such a request was made—I saw several persons in India who were much interested in his welfare, and his connections in that part of the world are very respectable—I therefore hope on their account as well as his own—whatever misdemeanours he may have been guilty of—they will not prevent him regaining his liberty should a fair opportunity offer.

* Among the letters are to be found several appeals by women on behalf of 'gentlemen' convicts. Several of the convicts from India were condemned for killing their opponents in duels, which gentlefolk at the time did not rate as crimes.

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 3 pp. 347, 349.



20 *Compassion Makes Strange Bedfellows*

'Ladies' were often in a difficult position when their sympathy was caught by the woes of convicts, especially educated men. There are few references to women's sympathy for female convicts, except in the practical sense of giving them good working conditions and restoring them to the conditions they had known at home. With men, it was different. Mrs Kent did not know personally the man she tried to help (L. 19); Mrs Marsden did. Sutton had been her husband's clerk. Moreover, he was a victim of a man few people liked—Simeon Lord, who had held the accounts for Wentworth and Mrs King and who was to be used by Commissioner Bigge against Macquarie. Now, probably framed by Lord, Sutton—he was found in possession of an inflammatory letter—was to be sent to Norfolk Island; and two very different people, John Macarthur and the wife of his Parramatta enemy, Samuel Marsden, the chief chaplain, probably each without knowing what the other was doing, appealed to the kindly Piper.

Macarthur's intervention is surprising. He was a good employer to his own assigned servants, but in general he was severe, and specially strict with educated men. His detractors may have believed his aim was to spite both King and Lord. His recommendation to Piper concluded, 'He is a gentleman by birth and education and I have no doubt is a man of honour.'

Mrs Marsden wrote in part, on 30 September 1805:

. . . Sutton, who was Mr Marsden clerk is going to be sent to your Government—he has suffered much here—and as I know you Governors have it so much in your power to be kind—if you could in any way soften his bondage—I know Mr Marsden would feel himself obliged—and I believe he writes to you on his behalf—

I remain Dear Sir
Yr Sincere friend
E. Marsden

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 3.



21 *Mrs Jennett Evans to Governor King*

The fact that this letter is also from a woman (normally, her husband would have written) is proof of the uneasy state of the colony after the

Irish rising. King had changed for the worse, saw danger and offence everywhere, and had sacked George Evans on a charge probably trumped up by the Rum Corps. His wife was taking a risk in presuming on her former friendship in asking a favour of the irascible Governor. The request was granted, but did little to relieve the hardships and bad luck that dogged them for the rest of her life.

Hawkesbury, 26th March, 1806

Sir,

On Thursday last there were several heavy showers, the same Evening the Rain seemed to have set in, Friday being likewise very wet, the water did not begin to rise till night, about nine o'clock Mr Evans went down to the lagoon, and it then had not the appearance of its having rose any; about half-past eleven I awoke and found the water almost up to the edge of our bed. Mr Evans got the bed, with myself and children, up in the loft; before daylight the water was in the loft, when we again moved in the heavy rain to the Ridge of the house and thro the repeated firing of Guns a man [by] the name of Pat Partland came over the River bank with a boat and took us off the house to Bakers. We had not left the house a quarter of an hour before the whole was covered, and part taken away; it was with great difficulty we saved a bed, a few of our wearing apparel and some papers of Mr Evan's; after we had been at Bakers about half an hour the water was rising into the building, when we saw a boat coming, which proved to be Mr Cox, who could not before then obtain a boat to come to our assistance. Mr Cox brought us away from Bakers to his own house, where we now are, we was on the house three hours had we been left an hour longer we must have drown'd, or perished with cold; it must have been providence alone that sent the man to our assistance, his property at the same time floating off, besides the very great danger of himself and boat being dashed to pieces by logs in crossing the river: we think it is our duty to inform you of our distress as we have lost everything, Pigs, Goats, Wheat, Corn, and other valuables are all gone, and have not yet found anything.

We request your Excellency, if the grant is not made out for our Children to let us remove to some other safe part of the Country. The whole of the farm was covered with water except a few acres on the high Lands, and had we been there the whole of the Grain and things growing would have gone, as we had not the means of obtaining conveyances to draw our productions into safe situations. My love to Mrs King and family. Our best wishes for you and familys health.

I am, etc, with respect,
Your Excellency's
Very grateful servant
J. Evans.

P.S. The water began to fall yesterday, and is now going down very fast.

Source: King Papers vol. 8; *see also* A.K. Weatherburn, *George William Evans, Explorer* (Sydney, 1966).



22 An Ex-convict Describes the Colony

This is another vivid account of an ex-convict married to a stable man, a First Fleet marine who remained on his grant at the Field of Mars (Ryde district), where he had settled in 1806. Socially and economically, Mrs Mary Macdonald (the former Mrs Oliver) falls somewhere between the Marsdens, the Macarthurs, and Margaret Catchpole. We know little of her crime or her daughter Barbara's circumstances. Her husband, Alexander Macdonald, was also among the early small men to produce wool, some of which was woven at Parramatta in 1810.

This letter, like Sarah Thornton's (L. 42) a few years later, would have circulated widely among humble country people, and helped to take the fear out of the threat of transportation as a deterrent to crime.

Extracts

1806

My dear Barbara

I received your letters, one wrote by yourself and the other by Mr Watson, which gave me such joy that my pen or word cannot express the sentiments of my heart, as I never received any account of you my dear child since I parted with you, but thank the Almighty that is now removed by hearing my dear Barbara has an affectionate husband and three children. You mention everything being an enormous price in England and a Husbandman's wages being so low you can hardly exist . . .

She goes on to describe how the family can get a free passage through the right recommendation and adds:

When you arrive here you have from the Governor of this place one hundred acres of land forever and Two men to cleare and work your ground and all kinds of stock and yourself and family and the Two men that would be given to you will be maintained by Government for eighteen months . . .

This my dear is the most healthful country in all the Globe for there is nothing that grows in a Hot or Cold country but comes to the greatest perfection here, for instance one acre of wheat will produce from 40–50 bushels . . . and as to fruit no country can equal it and our cattle is far beyond in size and meat to your finest cattle in England. So my dear do not lose a moment's time when you receive this but use all your interest and endeavours to come to the Garden of the World.

My husband came free to the Coloney along with Governor Phillips and gives me every encouragement to send for you, he having great possessions of land here and having no children he has willed everything that he possesses to me, as he has an estate in the Highlands of Scotland our situation in this Coloney is the most pleasant of any—and I am very sure it pleases the Almighty that you arrive safe in this Coloney that you will think yourself a Blessed Family . . . my prayer shall be for your speedy passage and safe arrival that I may once more embrace you in my longing arms to clasp you . . .

In the following November Mary sent practical instructions about the best seeds to bring to set up in the fruit-growing business and asks for

some useful articles to be brought. Whether Barbara did come to Australia is unknown.

If you can get to come to Australia please be sure to bring out all kinds of fruit seeds such as all Kinds of cherry stones, nectern stone plum stones and other Different Kinds of Curant Seed & Goosbury seeds with the Walnut chesnut filbert and the heasell nut which must be packed in Different Papers and put into a large bottle well corked and Seald and then packed up in a small Box if you do not take care of the seed according to the order it will be of no use to bring or send them and if you do and the seeds will answer here you will make a fortune soon any Kinds of Market Peach in Garden Seeds will be very serviceable & a few Kinds of the Putatoes that is most in Voge with you at home, if you can bring a little hop seeds & a pound or two of clover seed—Should be very happy to hear from you as soon as you can and acquaint me if you Received what I sent you and if you mean to come as me and my husband is getting [on] in years and will have no person to leave what we have if you do not come so more from your ever loving and dear mother till death Mary M^c Donald.

P.S. If you come bring some thread as it is one shilling a Skean here and Tobacco £3 a Pound and Sugar 8 shillings a Pound and Spirits £1.10 a Bottle and all other things according—my husband & I joins in our love to Your husband you and your family.

Source: Bonwick Transcripts, Box 19, p. 277: Bigge Report appendix.



23 *Mrs Macarthur Expresses Forebodings about Bligh*

Margaret Catchpole had signed a petition to welcome Governor Bligh. Mrs Macarthur took the opposite view. In this letter, she was reporting pessimistically on colonial conditions to her friend Miss Kingdon.

Extracts

29th January 1807

Our harvest is now getting in—Wheat is sold at from 25/- to 30/- the bushell. No sort of animal food is to be procured under 2/- the lb. 5/- for a fowl—10/- to 15/- for a goose. But our neighbours at Port Dalrymple, the Derwent are in a worse condition . . . This country has undergone so many changes for the worse that with difficulty I recognise it to be the place it was some six or seven years since.

. . . Our new Governor Bligh, is a Cornishman by birth. Mrs Putland who accompanied him is a very accomplished person. The Governor has already shown the inhabitants of Sydney that he is violent, rash, tyrannical. No very pleasing prospect at the beginning of his reign . . .

In October her dark mood had not lifted:

21st October 1807

Food, clothing and every necessary of life bear a price truly astonishing. All these melancholy changes may be considered the effects of tyranny and an improper administration of the law. Liberty has retired from amongst us into the pathless wilds, amongst the poor native inhabitants, who certainly maintain their independence, and have hitherto resisted any infringement on their rights. Nor will they become servants, for any continuance, whatever temptation may be offered them . . .

Source: S. Macarthur Onslow, *Macarthurs of Camden*, pp. 136, 137.



24 Bligh's Daughter Adds her Version

Governor Bligh had several daughters, but there was a special bond with Mary, who returned his affection almost with passion, in fact with a curious intensity that has aroused surprisingly little comment. She dragged her ailing husband Lt. Putland to Sydney, ostensibly for his health, but probably because she could not bear to part from her father. Their self-absorption blinded them dangerously to what was being felt and said around them.

The first impressions she made were good—physically attractive, accomplished, pleasing in her devotion. In later judgements her faults began to be noted. There was a curious episode on the trip. She became interested in a well-to-do clergyman convict transported for sexual offences against little girls, a practice he continued under Bligh's protection in Sydney. (As superintendent of the Female Orphan School he was finally dismissed and punished.) Another fellow-passenger was Ellis Bent, the new Judge-Advocate, who in his letter journal described her affectation and conceit as being of 'a degree greater than I have known in any other woman'. The same discerning pen recorded that her sudden, unexpected marriage to Maurice O'Connell, Governor Macquarie's second-in-command, was to ensure her stay in New South Wales to avenge the overthrow of her father. He was not wrong. Macquarie later found her vindictiveness such that he was moved to the very strong measure of requesting the removal of his own loyal regiment as the price of her going with them.

Sydney N.S. Wales
Oct... 10th 1807

My dearest Mother

I take the first opportunity to thank you for the kind Presents you sent me by M'. Blaxland, altho' I do not think the ship that conveys this will be home so soon as the one that is to sail in the course of a Fortnight, & by which I shall write a long letter to my dear sisters: the Gown is indeed very elegant & I received it without it having sustained the least injury; it was altogether different & superior to anything of this kind that had been seen in this country; all I can do for you in return my dear Mama is to be very particular in collecting shells & everything that I think can please you; of shells we have at present a great number for you, & I hope some of them will be new to you; the ship unfortunately goes to Milford Haven therefore the expence of carriage would be great to London, or we should have sent something for you by her, but by the Duke of Portland, the ship I mentioned before, we are certain of a safe & speedy conveyance.

Papa is quite well, but dreadfully harassed by business & the troublesome set of people he has to deal with, in general he gives great satisfaction but there are a few that we suspect wish to oppose him: as yet they have done nothing openly tho' it is their *Tools* have been at work since Christmas that is, they are trying to find something in Papa's conduct to write home upon but which I am sure, from his great circumspection, they will not be able to do with honor to themselves. M'. M'Arthur is one of the party; the others are the Military Officers, but they are all invited to the house & treated with the same politeness as usual.

I wish I could tell you that Putland is as well as my Father; since you last heard from us he has been constantly ailing, & has had every symptom of a consumption, for these two months past he has been confined to his room, but is now I trust in God gradually recovering: you may suppose he has required my whole attention & that except a dinner party now & then of eight or ten persons, we have not had any—In May Papa sent him to Norfolk Island as a sea passage was much recommended but it was not of any service to him his surgeon is a clever man & tells me I need not make myself at all uneasy, therefore I beg my dear Mama you will not do either: before my next I trust he will be much recovered.

I feel it is so painful a task to write to Mrs Putland on his account, that as it is most likely the next conveyance will be the first in England, shall defer it till then. M'. Palmers and M'. Campbells are the two principal families in the Colony; they are very worthy people and warmly attached to Papa.

I cannot express how much we were delighted with Betsey's Picture, we think it is the strongest likeness that can possibly be taken & the Drawing beautifully done: we can never repay & convey the pleasure it has given us. It is a long time since we have had any arrival from England or India. The Colony is in great distress for articles from the latter country, but nothing would do my spirits so much good just now as letters from my dear Mama & another Picture—Putland joins with me in affectionate love to you, my dear sisters, & Henry, a letter from Papa will accompany this, so I need not say more for him than that it is astonishing to me how he gets through the multiplicity of business he has without impairing his health—That this may find you all in health & happiness

Your affectionate
Daughter M. Putland

Source: G. Mackaness, *The Life of Vice-admiral William Bligh*, vol. 2, p. 149, quoting as his source 'Michellian MSS', which the Mitchell Library staff has been unable to identify.

25 Mrs Macarthur to Piper on Norfolk Island

This account of the period of anticlimax after the stirring events of the first couple of days of the Rum Rebellion presents Elizabeth at Parramatta quietly awaiting the birth of her youngest daughter. These days must have been a severe test of her courage; but curiously there is no written record of any doubts, qualms or anxious speculations about how the actions of the Rum Corps would be regarded by the home authorities. In fact, the whole thing made very little stir among ordinary people. The *Sydney Gazette* suspended publication for a short time; and when it resumed it would have been hard to have discovered from its pages the changes which had taken place.

Though Elizabeth writes of her husband's 'rigorous' treatment, Governor Bligh suffered worse treatment when his turn came for imprisonment.

Extract

5 February 1808

. . . I came down from Parramatta about a month since with our dear Elizabeth, who has been exceedingly ill ever since the month of May last, in order to try what a change of air might do for her, little dreaming of a revolution. Although the excessive despotism of the ruling power called aloud for a reform, but it never entered my head that the inhabitants would so effectually rouse themselves from the despairing lethargy they had fallen into, as to adopt so spirited a measure . . .

Mr Macarthur I fear will not be able to write to you. The Criminal Court is now sitting and he before it as a prisoner, but I trust it will be for no serious offence. Although he has been most rigorously treated, you are to understand this work began before the change of affairs and for ought I know was one means of accelerating it, as the very semblance of law and justice was from the beginning set aside . . .

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 3.



26 Mrs Wills to her mother, Mrs Harding

Sarah Wills's letter introduces a new element in New South Wales. The 'hell-ship' *Hillsborough* brought with convict husbands several free wives and their children. These women were later to provide some interesting biographies—see, for example, L. 29 and G. Dow, *Samuel Terry* (Sydney, 1974).

Her husband Edward was sentenced to death in 1797, for highway robbery, at the age of nineteen, the year after his daughter Sarah, later Mrs William Redfern, was born. His sentence being commuted to life imprisonment, he three landed in July 1799. By 1804 the family was living near Circular Quay, with a thriving import business, and by 1810 Edward was socially prominent in his group. He contributed £30 to the cost of sending John Macarthur to England to uphold the rebel cause. In 1811 Mrs Wills's mother paid them a visit, and the parents planned to send their English-born daughter, Sarah, to England with her to complete her education. Instead, she married the difficult emancipist, Dr William Redfern. That was in March 1811. Two months later Wills died. Mrs Wills bore a posthumous son, and later married George Howe, the government printer. The younger Wills daughter, Eliza, married Governor Macquarie's aide-de-camp, Henry Colden Antill, thus further complicating the family's involved social relationships.

This letter, with its anti-Bolith bias and family details, was written before Mrs Harding came to visit her daughter.

Extracts

May 1808

Dear Mother

Sally left school some time back on account of her Masters quitting the country, but I hope to be home soon enough for her to finish her education; she is tall for her age, and as much like her father as she can possibly be.

. . . Thomas is at school, and is taken great care of. Eliza is at school also, you would not know her from Sally, they are so much alike. Edward is a fine fellow, he is very big for his age, and so saucy that he can fight anybody.

. . . I have no doubt but you have heard of the character of Governor Bligh. He had not been here long when he took shameful advantage of those that lay in his power. From some he took good houses and gave them bad ones. From others he took their houses and turned them into the street without compensation. Some he stopped building, others he made make improvements against their inclination, in his endeavour to crush every person as much as possible. But at last the officers and gentlemen in general found themselves so much imposed on that they would put up with it no longer, and for the good of the people, Major Johnston took up the cause. On the 26th January, to our surprise the drums beat to arms, the soldiers marched to Government House, put the Governor under arrest, Major Johnston took command.

. . . We are still making money very fast, and when we think we have enough to live at ease will come home to give our dear friends a part.

Source: Frank Clune, *Bound for Botany Bay* (Sydney, 1964), p. 105.



27 Margaret Catchpole Chronicles Yet Another Flood

Writing to Mrs Cobbold, her beloved former employer, Margaret was still homesick, still dreaming of a pardon (which came five years later), but still practical. Her mind was full of the most recent Hawkesbury disaster, in which she had been involved.

Extracts, modernised

8 October
[1809]

. . . I am almost broken hearted first with the floods and with fear at such surprisingly high winds which cleared acres of standing timber and trees that were of very great size. We were afraid to stay indoors. My good lady, here there has been a flood which distressed us very much, then another on the last days of July and the first day of August, the biggest known by white men. It went over the tops of the houses, and there were many poor creatures crying out for mercy, crying out for boats, guns firing in distress, it was distressing to hear. This was the second time that Thomas Lacey, his wife and family were carried away in their barn, standing on the mow and making holes through the straw till they were taken out in boats and their lives were happily saved . . .

She itemised the cost of food as a result of the produce lost:

Wheat is one pound ten shillings per bushell, Indian corn fifteen shillings per bushell, beef eighteen pence, mutton eight, fresh pork fourteen pence, fresh butter five shillings per pound, tea, two and three pounds for a single pound, sugar five and six shillings per pound.

. . . I rent a small farm only twenty acres but half of it cleared. I live in my little cottage all alone except when a little child or two comes to stop with me—my good Lady, you know I am very fond of children. I hired a man to work my ground and I would have done very well had not this shocking flood come, it has made me very poor, my loss is about fifty pounds and (I was) within a very little of losing my own life.

. . . Letters are to be directed to be left at Mr Richard Palmer's, at the Black Swan, Brickfield Hill, Sydney, New South Wales.

Source: MS. A1508, (ML) letters to Mrs Cobbold; *see also* LL. 9, 14, 30, 31.



28 Macquarie and the Augean Stables

At the beginning of 1810 the new Governor, Lachlan Macquarie, set about the task of undoing as much as possible of the rebel rule. Leases and land grants were to be surrendered (a full list is contained in *HRA* I, 7, 314ff), and

each examined for cancellation or re-issue. But there was a loophole, and Macquarie was humane. Concessions and favours given to encourage or reward virtue, especially those given under Paterson as Lieutenant-Governor, could be considered reasonably safe. The grapevine spread the news, and determined hands, many of them female, grasped the unaccustomed pen.

A selection of the petitions provides considerable insight into ordinary colonial life at all levels at the beginning of a fresh phase.

The first petition introduces Rebecca, first wife of William Cox, the road builder. As wife of an ex-officer she knew correct procedure and wrote to J. Campbell, Macquarie's secretary. She, like Elizabeth Macarthur, was schooled in independence and the control of her family's affairs by the long absences of her husband. He was again away, as were the elder sons. So, on behalf of her youngest son, Mrs Cox calmly set out her reasonable request. Edward, at the age of 4½, became owner of a generous grant at Mulgoa.

Clarendon Farm, Hawkesbury,
Jan^Y. 13th, 1810

Sir

Agreeable to the instructions to the Proclamation of the 4th instant I take the liberty of encloseing the Deeds of a Grant of Land to my youngest son by Col: Paterson.

I trust sir after his Excellency has made the necessary enquiries I may be deem'd worthy of a renewal of the said grant for my little boy & more particularly for the present use of my stock which is much in want of fresh pasture the food on the Common they now run [on] being greatly exhausted.

Permit me sir to request the favor of your stateing to his Excellency my petition for the foregoing indulgence which will particularly oblige.

Sir Your most obedient servant

Rebecca Cox

To J. Campbell.

The second letter, much less direct, in fact downright devious, is from Rosetta Marsh, another of the free wives from the *Hillsborough* (L. 26). She was an innkeeper when she wrote. She had arrived as a convict's widow, had soon married another prisoner, and had become the mistress of Dr John Harris, builder of Ultimo House and Experiment Farm, who protected her and to whom she bore a child. She had a collection of children and was already a rich woman and about to marry Samuel Terry, the 'Botany Bay Rothschild', who was busy getting rid of his mistress to clear their way to the altar. She claimed (in part):

That Your Excellency's Memorialist came to this colony about eleven years ago (a Free Woman). That she has Three Children Fatherless and unprotected which she had hitherto Maintained and Educated by the most persevering Industry, and by an equal share of Industry is now possessed of a considerable number of Horn'd Cattle, Breeding Mares and other Stock . . .

She then claims the farm is held in trust for her children, and concludes:

Your Memorialist indulges the hope that your Excellency will be informed by the Memorialist's unremitting attention to her family—her persevering Industry and her extensive Stock, and that it was under such circumstances alone that she received the land for herself, and in Trust for her children—Circumstances, she humbly trusts that will induce your Excellency to continue her in possession of the Land granted to her on the condition specified in this memorial as she obtained it without partiality or favour.

Most respectfully.

Mary Moran's pitiful petition, probably her unaided composition, was happily marked in Macquarie's strong flowing writing 'To be confirmed'. 'Captain Dennet' was Captain Thomas Dennott, captain of the *Hillsborough*, who was censured for his ill-treatment of his prisoner passengers. Mary was surely Irish and was 'free by servitude'. She had served her time and was therefore an emancipist, not a free woman—then, an important distinction.

The humble pittition of Mary Moran most respectfully Sheweth to Your Excellency that I Came to this country May ninty seven with Capt Dennet and During this Thime I have Behaved Meseld upright and Honest By my Industry I have purchased a house and By my Obtaining a Caracter Colonel Patterson Was pleased to Grant me a Lease for it.

Your Excellency pittitioner Whishes that Your Excellency Will regrant the Same your pittitioner Is Ever In Duty Bound to pray for your Excellency's Welfare

Mary Moran freewoman

Mary Moore presents her case in a strong, educated hand, and Mary Mullett pleads like a lawyer.

Mary Moore, a widow Woman and Inhabitant of Chapel Row, Sydney, most humbly begs leave to State for Your Excellency's Consideration, that she has been in this Country, a period now of seven years and have always supported the Character of an honest, sober, Industrious Woman which she can easily get many People of respectability to bear testimony of, and by her Industry she was enabled to Build a dwelling House which Induced her to make application Of His Honor Gov Paterson, for a Lease, when His Honor was pleased to grant her a Lease for fourteen years, on her said House and premises. In Consequence of which, she now humbly solicits the favor of Your Excellency, to confirm the same, for which Indulgence, and great Benefit, she will ever consider herself in duty bound to Pray.

Jan^y 27th 1810

Mary Moore.

Mary Mullett wrote:

That Memorialist in obedience to Your Excellency's Order Surrenders the Inclosed Lease which is a renewal of an original one granted by His Excellency Governor Hunter and which Lease is now nearly expired . . .

That your memst has been a resident in this colony nearly fourteen years during which her conduct has been Irreproachable and as your memst obtained this Renewal through no other mode or motive whatsoever but as a favour usually granted to those inhabitants which appeared Deserving of that indulgence and under those Circumstances a memorialist most respectfully presumes to hope Your Excellency will be pleased to take it into your Consideration and have no objection to Confirm it.

Mary Mullett

Mary Marshall and the many-sided Robert Sidaway had neglected to regularise their union of long standing and recognised permanence, and Macquarie, who had thundered against irregular affairs in the press, felt bound to refuse Mary's appeal to be executrix of the estate she had helped to amass.

Mary Marshall
Most Respectfully Sets forth

That Your Excellency's Memorialist has been in this colony nearly Twenty-two years during which time she lived with Robert Sidaway, who died a few months back. That during his life time he was Baker for the Troops.

That at the time of his Death he was possessed of Leasehold premises in the Township of Sydney, and Your Memorialist being left residuary Legatee, applied to and requested Colonel Paterson to renew this Lease which he was pleased to do.

May it therefore please Your Excellency to consider the case of Your Memorialist and Condescend to allow her to remain in possession of the said Leased Ground and Premises.

Most Respectfully, &
Mary Marshall

Most of the appeals were lodged in January 1810, but Esther Julian (*née* Abrahams) did not employ her amanuensis till 30 October. She probably could not write, at least not in English, since the petition and signature are in the same hand.

In 1786 she was sentenced to seven years' transportation for stealing lace. She was about 15 and pregnant, her daughter Rosanna being born before she left England in 1787 in the *Lady Penrhyn*, on board which she met Lieutenant George Johnston, whose *de facto* wife she became when they landed at Sydney Cove. In 1800 she adopted the name Julian, presumably the name of Rosanna's father.

A quiet and very attractive woman, Esther bore Johnston three sons and four daughters during their *de facto* union and the couple were married in 1814, after Johnston had been cashiered.

In petitioning Macquarie she trod delicate ground. A Jewess, she was a member of a small and unpopular group, and she was also mistress of the man at that time facing court martial as instigator of the rebellion Macquarie had been expressly dispatched to stamp out. Thus the Governor's curt 'Inadmissible', which he noted on her petition, should not have been a surprise.



Esther Abrahams (Julian), First Fleet convict, 1788, and later wife of Major George Johnston, from *Australian Genesis* by J.S. Levi and G.J.F. Bergman, by courtesy of the authors and Rigby Publishers.

The story had a happy ending: Esther regained her grant, and her children did well (though one, Robert, tried to have her declared mentally incompetent as a drunkard in a very painful court case). The daughter she brought with her, as Mrs Isaac Nicholls, became mother of the MP who succeeded in having the legal disabilities of his co-religionists removed.

Draft only from poor photostat

The Memorial of Esther Julian

Most humbly sheweth

That Memorialist, agreeable to your Excellency's Proclamation has returned the Deeds of your Memorialist's grant of land, which she obtained from Colonel Paterson, he then holding the Governorship of this Colony.

That Memorialist has been two and twenty years in this Colony during which time she never received the smallest indulgence from Government save the said Grant which Governor Paterson considered she was entitled to.

That Memorialist has got a large Family and as it is her intention to settle in the Country and has obtained a considerable stock of horned cattle for which she would be at a serious loss for grazing ground if deprived of the said Land, Memorialist hopes that Your Excellency may take her case into your kind and generous consideration as the said grant will afford her an opportunity of making improvements thereon, and of gratefully acknowledging Your Excellency's generosity and goodness

And Memorialist will pray
Esther Julian.

Source: J.S. Levi and G.F.J. Bergman, *Australian Genesis: Jewish Convicts and Settlers* (Adelaide, 1974), p. 23; Memorial A-K no. 167A (CSIL) to Macquarie, p. 44, 30 January 1810.

Elizabeth Hume, *née* Kennedy, an educated woman, arrived free with her family and married the unfortunate Alexander Hamilton Hume. She shared his misfortunes, losing her good job at the Female Orphan School probably through some misdeed of his. She lived to be eighty-seven, and to see her son Hamilton become one of the acclaimed explorers.

May it Please Your Excellency

Your Petitioner Mrs Elizabeth More Hume takes the liberty of mentioning to Your Excellency, she came to this country with her brother and Family as a Free Settler who was recommended by the present Lord Barham, Wm. Wilberforce and Ambrose Serle Esq.,

Upon the Establishment of the Orphan School Your Petitioner was appointed senior mistress which appointment she filled near two years with credit, but for some unpleasant Domestic Circumstances and the increase of Family Your Petitioner was obliged to quit, since which time she has had many and various Difficultys and distresses having lost her all Twice by fire, and once by the Overflow of the Hawkesbury, which Col. Johnston knew in consideration of which, and some service which M^r. Hume rendered Gov^r. when he had charge of the stock, was pleased to give Petitioner's family a cow from the Gov^r. stock which she now has in her possession and has been chief suport of her family during the late scarcity of provision—

Mrs Paterson was Patroness of the Orphan School in your Petitioner's time and always professed a readiness to serve her, Recommended her Family to the late Lieu. Gov. Col Paterson who gave her and her children a Grant of Sixty acres of land in the district of Prospect Hill, which was measured and the Grant made out which now lies in the office.

Your Petitioner humbly hopes, should Your Excellent be pleased to confirm these grants to such as you may think worthy, she may be considered as one deserving Your Excellency's indulgence. And Your Petitioner

As in duty bound
Will ever Pray

Two unlike characters, similar only in their misfortunes, were the comic, exasperating and pathetic Martha Luttrell and the enigmatic Margaret Baynon, whose complicated affairs required a memorandum to be sent by Macquarie to Scotland to elucidate them.

Poor Martha, a clergyman's daughter, was unfortunate enough to marry a well-born Irishman, Edward Luttrell, descendant, so he claimed, of the 'Lords of Ireland'. As a surgeon in New South Wales, he proved to be both incompetent and dishonest, and was dismissed. With a large family to support, he fell into poverty. Though Macquarie was unable to grant his wife's shameless request to set the family up as purveyors of illicit grog supplied from the government stores, he did what he could to help by allowing them government rations.

Margaret's husband did not accompany her, but remained in England. She was neither assigned nor put on the stores. When pardoned, she remained in Sydney and produced a son. There was no mention of a husband.

The circumstances of our having a large family to provide for, together with the recollection of your politeness to me on various occasions, induces me to intrude on your goodness so far as to request permission from you to purchase either from the Bonded Stores or from some vessel now in the Cove a quantity of spirits for the use of my Family from 50 to a hundred gallons. This indulgence on your [part] would much relieve our Necessities and I earnestly entreat of your Excellency not to refuse me this Favor, my Husband alone is on the Stores, of all his numerous Family, and that a recent unexpected diminution of his pay considerably encrases our Embarrassments.

I have the Honor
to remain Sir respectfully
Your Excellency's obedient Servant
M. Luttrell.

The Humble Petition of Margaret Baynon
Most Respectfully Sheweth

That Your Petitioner was bred at Cardiff in Wales in the Year 1801 and she has been near NINE YEARS here in all which time She has hardly ever Know what it was to have the Enjoyment of her health a Month together and having an Aged Parent which is very anxious to see her Makes her have a Great Desire to see her Native land once more in hopes it May with the Blessing of God be the Means of Restoring her to Health again.

That Petitioner since her arrival in this Colony has always resided in the house she now dwells in being No. 14 the Sign of the Compass in South row Sydney and has always done her utmost Endeavour to conduct herself as becoming her unfortunate Situation and thru her Good Conduct and behaviour his Excellency Govr King near six Years back was pleased to Grant her a Conditional Pardon since which time she trusts her Character will bear the Most Strictest Scrutiny.

Petitioner Therefore Most humbly begs Your Excellency will be pleased to take into Your Serious Consideration that She has been near THIRTEEN YEARS under the Heavy Sentence of Life and her good conduct & behaviour and be pleased in Mercy to Sanction her

an Absolute Pardon which His Honor Colonel Paterson was pleased to grant her and which she now surrenders agreeable to Your Excellency's Proclamation

And Petitioner as in Duty Bound
Will ever pray & & &

We the undersigned beg
leave to recommend the Petitioner
to Your Excellency as a Very
honest, sober and discreet Person
Henry Fulton
David Bevan.

Source: CSIL, Memorials re Land (Archives of New South Wales).



29 Mary Ann Shears to the Father of her Sons

Hers is an interesting story of a humble woman, born of ex-convict parents. As *de facto* wife of an officer, she was accepted by Mrs Macquarie and Mrs Macarthur, and as wife by Lady O'Connell, and Lady Mary FitzRoy. A good stepmother to a girl only a few years younger than herself, she shared the financial ups and downs of John Piper without loss of dignity, and was finally married to him in 1816.

The Pipers sailed for England by the *Providence* in September 1811, on leave, taking with them, besides their own children, Sally, Piper's teenage daughter by an undocumented earlier liaison.

The Dr Martain she mentions is probably Martin Mason, the first doctor to practise privately outside Sydney.

York Street Sydney April 13th 1811

Dear Sir,

I received your note by the passage Boat—and I am happy to inform you that our dear little Boys are in a fair way of recovery they are both in very good spirits and never cease talking about you.

Doctor Martain had been to see them and desires me to send to him this morning and he would send something for them. I am in perfect health but Sally's left Eye is almost closed. We all wish for your return.

And I remain
Yours sincerely
Ann Shears.

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 1.



Mary Ann (Mrs John) Piper, by courtesy of Mr and Mrs Bland and Miss Buscombe
(now in the National Gallery of Australia).



30 *The Ageing Margaret Catchpole to her Uncle, William Howes*

This is the last letter we have from Margaret Catchpole, though she lived eight more years. When she died in 1819, the Rev. Henry Fulton buried her in an unmarked grave which, a Dight family descendant recorded, was within that family's plot in Richmond churchyard. The tone is mellow. Margaret still longs for home, but though pardoned in 1814, and in a better position than most women to earn her return passage, she is rooted in Australia, and accepts it.

Referring to a cousin who had not married, Margaret said:

2.9.1811

I am not [married] and almost fifty years old nor do I intend. I hope to see home once more and to see dear Cousin Charles weigh me a pound of tea for me and that fine strong young man Samuel to make me a pair of shoes and poor Lucy to thread my needle, for my eyes are not so good as they were, but thank God I can do so well as I do. I rent a little farm, of about fifteen acres, but half of it standing timber and the cleared ground I hire men to put in my corn and I work a great deal myself. I have got thirty sheep and forty goats, thirty pigs and 2 dogs, they take care of me for I live all alone, not one in the house. There is a house within twenty roods of me, I have a good many friends that I go to see when I think proper, such as I have nursed when they lay in cannot do without me, I am looked upon very well thank God. I hope to get a few pounds to come home with. The white frosty mornings is just the saving of us, it has been very cold indeed this winter, but nothing like your snow—that was very shocking indeed. I am very sorry to hear you have lost your friend and I am very sorry that I have lost a good friend like Mrs Sloorgin for she sent me this time 12 yards of Irish cloth, 3 yards of ribbon, 3 good books and writing paper and this is some of it. Mrs Cobbold sent me a very handsome present 2 pieces for nine [? capes/caps] four last ones, one just as it came off her own head which I thought more of than anything. I put it on directly and many more things too long to mention. My dear Aunt, your hair is kissed and cried over, I will always keep it and I have the other by me that you sent and hope the next time you send you will send some of Lucy's and Charles' hair. Dear Uncle, you must think I can walk well for when I heard there was a box for me, I set off and walked fifty miles in two days. You cannot tell the happiness it gave me, and tell my friends I was overjoyed to hear of it, now this will give me great happiness for a long time and I hope Lucy will always be very dutiful to her mother as my dear aunt must be getting into years, for I do not grow younger myself and have lost all my front teeth, [but] I can stir about as briskly as ever and am in good spirits. Dear uncle I hope when you write again you will send me word of all friends and thank you for the newspapers, and I wish I could send you some, but there is no time, the ship is going to sail directly so I must conclude with my sincere love to you and all my cousins and pray to God to keep his Bliss upon you all and not forgetting myself adieu

Margreat Catchpole

I am very proud of my dear Charles' letter and sorry I had not time to answer it but I will the next time. James will soon get a rich man I think if he minds Samuel and I hope will overtake them. By taking care this place is getting very plentiful, but everything is very dear, beef mutton and pork 15 to 18 pence per pound, wheat from 12 to 15 shillings per bushell, butter five shillings per pound.

On March the fourteenth is my birthday, then I am fifty years old.

Source: Margaret Catchpole: Letters to relatives, typescript copies (A3D59, ML).



31 *The Rev. Richard Cobbold Gives Free Range to his Imagination*

After writing a truly masterly description of an Aboriginal fight, Cobbold ended 'they take no delight in these pageants of blood and murder. In this respect, degraded as they are in other things, they are not so bad as some were in the age of chivalry'.

He further claimed that Margaret Catchpole had sent, by the *Buffalo*, some mountain pheasants which were presented by the Cobbolds to the local museum. They were, even then, rare, and Margaret's were the first to arrive.

In the next letter, yet another rewriting of one from Margaret Catchpole to Mrs Cobbold, but based on at least some fact, Cobbold takes flight in a significant way.

Richmond Hill
Sept 1st, 1811

Dear lady, I am grieved to hear of the death of poor Miss Anne that was. She was always the most meek-spirited of all the young ladies. Master Rowland was always my favourite. He was born in those happy days when I lived with you; and he, too, is gone. Your letter conveys very anxious tidings; and, though joyful to me to see your dear handwriting, yet I grieve to find that you have been so ill. Oh! if there was anything in this country that would do you good, however difficult it might be to be obtained, I would not cease using all my efforts until I had got it for you. If I can find anything at any time which may be new to you, and please your dear, good mind, anything you have not heard of before, what pleasure it will be to me!

Oh! never can I be dutiful or grateful enough to you for your goodness to me. God preserve you long to be a blessing to your dear family and friends!

I am ashamed, my dear madam, to send this hasty scribble into your hands, but the ship is about to sail directly, and I am hard pressed for time. I am pleased to think that you got my long list of dried plants and birds. I am sorry the insects were not better fastened in the case; I will attend particularly to your instructions about them for the future. I am living alone, as I was when I last wrote you, and am getting on well, in a very honest and independent way of life. People wonder why I do not marry. I cannot forget my late trials, troubles, and horrors, and I dread forming any acquaintance with any man. I was happy before any such notions entered my mind, and I have been comparatively happy since I have had not more notions of the same sort. So I am single and free.

The cap you have sent me, which you say is a great favourite of yours, I put on last evening, and drank my tea in it, with some tears of reflection. My heart was so full, to think that the work of your own hands, and that which graced your own head, should cover such an unworthy one as mine, made me feel humble and sorrowful, as well as joyful and thankful. I must hastily conclude this letter, as the messenger calls for any ships letters for Sydney. May the blessing and thanks of your grateful servant reach your heart from the soul of

Your ever devoted servant
Margaret Catchpole.

That was the end of reality. The clergyman, forgetting what he had expanded from an actual letter, then added a happy ending of his own. On the same page he reintroduces 'the true hero of our simple story', John Barry, and happily weds him to Margaret, and leaves them enjoying respect, esteem and prosperity in New South Wales.

Source: Cobbold, *Margaret Catchpole*, pp. 90, 226. A holograph of this letter marked to John Cobbolt but addressed 'Honnerd Maddam' is in MS. A1508 (ML).



32 *The Great Success Story: Mary Reibey's Business Style*

Mary Reibey's conviction as a horse thief was probably the result of a frolic, when neighbours, perhaps out of spite for her grandmother, brought a charge against her. Convicted in July 1790 (aged 13) and transported for seven years, on the way she met a suitable young man, who is said, on her arrival, to have had her assigned to Major Grose, where she was safe till he could return as a settler and marry her. From then on, it was a hard, vigorous struggle to establish her family. Her social rise is a good illustration of personality. Perhaps Mary Reibey was too forceful, intelligent and outspoken to be acceptable to the circle of ladies dominating the social world—see, for example, L. 88. Lady Franklin sniffs at her prisoner background, even in the next generation, but she was a practised sniffer. Mrs Reibey's world was that of trade, not army-navy-landholding. Written crisply and clearly, in a good hand, this holograph letter tells much of Mary Reibey.

May it Please Your Excellency

I Respectfully take the Liberty to Request Your Excellency's Permission to receive into my Employ William Burnett the Bearer hereof Late Seaman on board the Ship New Zealander now in this port. He is quitting Said ship by Permission of Captain Elder, obtain'd in writing—according to Your Excellencys Port Orders, and Regulations.

Acknowledging the obligation I shall receive in Your Excellency's acquiescence I very Respectfully take the Liberty to Subscribe myself

Your Excellency's Most humble
and obedient Servant
M. Reibey

Sydney Sep 18th
1811

His Excellency the Governor
and commander in chief
&c- &c- &c

Source: CSIL (1811), Bundle 5, p. 252.



33 Ann Chapman Seeks an Assigned Servant

On 3 October 1811, Ann Chapman, who showed herself to be a battler, wrote Governor Macquarie's secretary a letter showing her to be as active with her pen and her business as in her domestic life. She had arrived from Lancaster in 1803 under sentence for seven years. Four years later 'free by servitude' (three years of her sentence served before landing), she applied for her certificate of pardon, which was issued in September 1812.

In her letter she claimed that she was a widow with ten children. There was no mention of her husband, or any other personal details. She seems to have run her business reasonably successfully; and she not only needed but was in a position to support an assigned servant.

She later held a wine and spirit licence, and undertook several other enterprises.

Sir presuming on your goodness, I humbly hope you will pardon this freedom. I would wish to inform, His Excellency the Governor was pleased to promise when any man came from Europe, I should have one for the Parramatta Passage Boat, of which I have been the propereator for many years and having a family of ten children I find it extremely difficult to struggle through Life, and as I understand applications are to be made to you Sir, I humbly hope you will be pleased to insert my name in the list, and should I be so happy as to get one, it will in a great degree aleviate the distresses of an afflicted widow

and will with my family be ever
Bound to Bless your goodness
Your Most Obdt Ann Chapman

Oct 3 1811

Source: Chapman Archives, 4/1770, 4/4427. Certificates of Pardons and Tickets of Leave, (CSIL), p. 280.



34 Mrs Macarthur, Alone Again, to Piper

This letter followed the Pipers to England and chiefly concerns the small social events of the still uneasy community and the delicacy of Elizabeth's own position, in spite of the Macquaries' kindness. It is the least legible and worst preserved of her letters, but even in brief extracts it throws light on the scene.

Despite the formality of address, the letter shows her need of Piper's sympathy, because he understood her feelings.

One interesting comment, omitted because only partly decipherable, shows Eliza Bent's jealousy of Governor and Mrs Macquarie and her spitefulness about them. These feelings were not to die away, as L. 54 shows.

Mr Ovens was Surveyor John Ovens; Major Cleveland, a popular officer who died on his way home; Major and Mrs Geils, who became warm friends of Elizabeth, arrived with the regiment that succeeded Macquarie's.

. . . You will perceive I am still at Sydney, where Elizabeth has remained, ever since your departure; and myself also, with the exception of a few days I have passed in two visits to Parramatta—my abode here is for medical attendance to Elizabeth, in order that she may be relieved from that [word illegible] affection, which has weakened her very much. I think she is getting better. Mary and Miss Lucas are at Parramatta quite well; I returned from thence yesterday, you cannot fancy how reluctantly I came away, or how beautiful & [word illegible] the scenery is just now about our Farm. We have had some refreshing rain since you left us, which has given a new grace to the country. You may believe me when I say, that we experience a great blank in the loss of your society. For the first week there was nothing but lamentation—Cap^o. Piper & Mr Ovens—M^r. Ovens & Cap^o. Piper—Major Cleveland too—what a loss!

She says, with the key word missing, apropos of O'Connell, 'the lieu.^o Gov.^r' is prohibited from exercising much prerogative'. This was at the time of Macquarie's visit to Van Diemen's Land, and may hint at Mrs O'Connell's attitudes.

I know that the friendly sentiments you feel for me, & our family, will lead you to rejoice when I tell you that the good people at Sydney have been uncommonly attentive & kind—among the number of those I must not fail to mention Major & Mrs Geils, from whom we have received the most marked kindness.—The Gambier & Friends have not yet sailed . . . It is expected that Mr Marsden has sold him his Brush Farm. Mrs Marsden & the children are still at the Hawkesbury where I believe M^r. M. would willingly leave them provided he might be at liberty to follow his own pursuits at the mill.

. . . we have rec.^d a few letters & some papers containing an account of Col. Johnston's trial, the sentence not known, how very tantalising & distressing for me who am so much interested in the Event—the Commodore is finally exposed, however the affair terminates. You will probably know before this reaches your hands.—I rec.^d a letter from my dear John, he was in London, and only two lines from his dear Father, who was so much engaged in attending the court martial that his time was exclusively devoted to that object.—I will not dwell on this subject, which is most vexacious & distracts me . . . Elizabeth unites with me in every friendly wish towards you, & she begs her remembrance to your fellow passengers.—You cannot think how pleased we were, & how much it gratified us the *cheers*, you gave us outside the Heads of Port Jackson . . .

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 3.



35 Mrs Macquarie Underestimates the Opposition

Piper was still missed fifteen months after his departure, and his women friends continued to keep him up-to-date on Australian affairs. Mrs Macquarie wrote confidently, for this was their happy time before mounting criticism and opposition, open or covert, darkened the scene.

Sydney New South Wales
2nd Dec.¹ 1812

Dear Sir,

I received your letter from Norfolk Island & the Governor has also had the pleasure to receive Yours to him from the Cape of Good Hope; but the letters which you mention as being sent from China have not yet reached us—

We have been sincerely shocked by hearing of the death of dear Major Cleveland—the Governor thinks if he had remained on board the Providence, it might not have happen'd.

We have receiv'd no letters on this subject, but we expect to hear from you by the next arrival.

I suppose all your friends are writing to you, but I have determined at all events that I shall. We are all well here, & the Colony continues prosperous; a small attempt has been made by some of the old Faction, with a desire as I think to make it appear that the Colony is not quiet, notwithstanding the absence of the Old Head [John Macarthur]—All I have to say to you on this subject is, that those who act with impropriety must suffer for it, let them be who they may, which if they continue to be troublesome they certainly will. But the probability is as things seem that the people will be quiet and all will go on so for a while. This I can say particularly to you—I think some of your friends will probably magnify this mole hill into a mountain where in fact it is only a mole hill, & a very small one too.

This letter is beautifully written the dispatches are just about to be closed, that is the cause.

The Governor & Captain Antill unite with me in our kind regards to you I wish you would come back to us, & keep your Ladies in order, they have all gone to sixes and sevens since your departure we cannot now get above two of the Bs* to speak to each other.

I am well, may every good wish attend you.† I am your true & sincere friend E.H. Macquarie.

* The reference to the two Bs is obscure—perhaps Mrs Bent, or Mrs O'Connell (*née* Bligh) or perhaps a Blaxland, whose social life was determined by her father's animosities.

† Perhaps a conventional wish, perhaps inspired by insight into the possible pitfalls ahead of the curious family group.

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 2.



36 Background to the Hassalls: Elizabeth Hassall to a Spiritual Sister

Here is the grim evangelical core of the Parramatta church group, centred more in the Hassall influence than in that of the slightly more worldly

Marsdens. The Tahiti missionaries, of whom Mrs Nott was one, were of lower social class and less education. Thomas, Elizabeth's eldest son, was the first man educated in Australia to become ordained in the Church of England, and destined even before that to be the busy guide and director of the active Sunday School movement. Elizabeth's daughters married clergymen of even stricter sects.

This dismal letter is given in full for its peculiar flavour, so different from the uncomplicated piety of the upper social levels, and because it gives the background to the activities that fill the Hassall letters.



Elizabeth (Mrs Rowland) Hassall, c. 1800, unsigned, n.d., by courtesy of the Mitchell Library.

Parramatta
July 31 1813

My dear Mrs Nott

Yours per favor Bro Henry,—came safe to hand, and I anxiously imbrace his return to answer the same—I have the pleasure to acknowledge that through the good providence of God my Dear Husband and each of our children injoy a good shure of health and peace for which I desire to bless his holy name and pray that you and your dear Husband may injoy the same blessings in a superior degree—I was very glad to hear of your speedy voyage only 28 days to Tahiti, what cause for thankfullness, when you compare the same with poor Miss Christies—16 weeks, I hope the good providence of God will fill you with thankfullness—your letter also was also a matter of grief as well as gladness, to hear of my 3 dear sisters being taken off—I cant inform you how my mind was effected—a circumstance I so little expected O dear Mrs N, How uncertain the comforts of life—and even life itself, these things considered what, what manner of women ought we to be in all holy conversation and godlyness, O let us consider that altho they are no more—Yet they are a Voice to us to be doubly diligent in the work of the Lord—O that—He may strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to [?] direct] we may be truly followers of those who through faith and patiance now inherit the promise—I have no doubt but that our sisters are in glory with their dear Redeemer, their evil day is past but we have—it may be—a few more stormy winters, and scorching summers to go through. It is only a May be, perhaps our Lord and Master may call us to his righteous Barr at the shortest notice, to account for all our engagements with him. You & I have given up ourselves to be wholly His for ever, By a sacramental oath, We have again, and again sworn allegiance to the King of Kings & Lord o Lords—the Vows of God are upon us—who is sufficient to go through what lies before us. May the Lord give us strength according to our day—that we may not sculk in the rear but venture boldly for the Lord—be desidedly on God part, knowing nothing but Christ and him crucifyed, having holiness written upon all we do—that the Heathen and our friends & neighbours may be constrained to say that we are followers of Christ as dear children—o what a desirable pattern for our imitation in every case let us consider what our dear Lord would do in shuch circumstances—which will teach us to be more humbly more prayerfull,—more paecable more obedient more heavenly minded more cheerfull in the work of the Lord, more loving to our Husbands & friends and by thus looking to our dear Lord Jesus we shall be able to fill up our appointed stations in this time state to bare each others burdens in the Lord—and when we are called as our dear sisters have been to their heavenly Father we shall be able to cast our crowns at his feet and declare to his praise that he has done all things well—and may the Lord bring us in the most heavenly manner to injoy him, that we may see the evil of all things contrary to his holy will and find by happy experiance that Salvation is all of grace.

I am very sorry to hear from you that friend Hayward—so much forgot himself to distress, the distressed, in reading Fox's Trash to his wife in her diing moments, and sincerely wish that he may have a better comforter in such trying cases, and that we may truly learn to beheav to our dear Husbands in such a way that they cant forbare but in love and affection to bear with us in the most dificult circumstancus that we may be truly yoke fellows in the Lord.

I was much concerned to hear of the poor state of health your dear Husband injoyed and think you should never be without Caster oil as it seems the best Medicine in his case and which may be easily made in Taheita—but further let me remind you my dear friend that no

medicine will do him any real good unless the Lord shall bless the same therefore pray for a blessing upon every mains—and let me, my dear Creature intreat you so to love your Husband, serve the Lord Jesus, fill up your station in the which you are placed and adorn the gospel in all things so that your prayers be not [indecipherable] and all things be for the best—with kind love to friend Nott as well as to yourself and praying that the good will of our God may rest upon you & yours and wish to hear from you soon

I remain

Dr Mrs Nott Yours

sincerely

Elizabeth Hassall

To Mrs Nott

Oteheita

Source: Rowland Hassall Papers vol. 2, p. 55 (A860, ML).



37 *Mrs Macarthur on Life at Elizabeth Farm and Aboriginal Attacks*

Macarthur was still in England, leaving Elizabeth completely in control of all the family activities. Miss Lucas was friend and supporter as well as governess. Elizabeth junior's health had improved, and she was working herself into a special role as cultivated, amused spectator of colonial life. Mary, the second daughter, was soon to meet her future husband, the younger boys to return from their education in England and tours with their father on the continent. This time was probably Elizabeth's zenith.

Aboriginal depredations, such as Elizabeth records in this letter to Miss Kingdon, were also reported by Samuel Hassall in the form of attacks on lonely huts and even groups near Camden. They indicate the despair of the local tribes, caught between white settlement spreading west and their enemies among the inland tribes.

Macquarie's efforts on behalf of the grass widow seem unusual, to judge by Hannibal Macarthur's sharp comments. The woman Elizabeth mentions was a shepherd's wife; the 'old favourite' was William Baker.

Extracts

1816

My dear Eliza

. . . I know not what I can say of our mode of life, that will give you a correct idea of it. It is a mixture of town and country life; and yet in many respects unlike anything you can have experienced. Our *climate* is delightful, and we have in high perfection and in great abundance the fruits of warm and cold climate . . . We have an abundance, even to

profusion, in so much that our Pigs are fed on Peaches, Apricots and Melons in the season . . .

We grow wheat, barley, oats, we make hay, at least I do, and so does Mrs Macquarie but the practice is not general. We feed hogs, we have cattle, keep a dairy, fatten beef and mutton and export fine wool. A variety of avocations arising from these pursuits keeps the mind pretty busily employed. Our society as the country has increased in population has become more extended. On particular days, such as the King's or Queen's Birthday there are parties at Government House, numbering occasionally 150 persons. I will not say that these assemblies have been very select. However there is a sufficiency of pleasant, agreeable persons to visit and be visited by, to satisfy one who is not ambitious to have a very numerous visiting acquaintance. The Regiment now stationed here is the 46th commanded by Colonel Molle, who is also Lieutenant Governor. The Colonel is a most accomplished, charming man, who has seen much of the world. Mrs Molle—friendly and affectionate, and pretty conversant with the same sort of knowledge, but she appreciates it at its true worth . . .

I am much oppressed with care on account of our stock establishments at our distant farms, at the Cowpastures, having been disturbed by the incursions of the natives. The savages have burnt and destroyed the shepherds habitations, and I daily hear of some fresh calamity. Yesterday the Governor was pleased to order a non-commissioned Officer and six soldiers out to protect our establishments from further injuries. Two years ago a faithful old servant who had lived with us since we first came to the Colony was barbarously murdered by them and a poor defenceless woman also. Three of my people are now reported to be missing, but I trust they will be found unhurt . . .

Source: Macarthur Onslow, *Macarthur's of Camden*, pp. 304–5, 311.

And Elizabeth jnr Describes her own Preoccupations with the Native People

An earlier letter from the younger Elizabeth to Piper on Norfolk Island, written when barely into her teens and just returned from England, showed her to be that unusual phenomenon in a raw new country, the sheltered, precocious, somewhat complacent invalid. She was now a slightly self-conscious blue stocking in a small way.

Extract

8th March 1817

. . . They are a singular race utterly ignorant of the arts, living constantly in the open air, and without any other covering than occasionally, cloaks of the skins of wild animals, but even these are not universally worn, it is not uncommon to see them without any covering at all. They are nevertheless very intelligent and not obtrusive. They have great vivacity and a peculiar turn for mimicry—acquiring our language, tones and expressions with singular facility. Their carriage is very graceful, and perhaps they possess more native politeness than is found amongst any people. They deem [it] a great want of breeding to contradict. In all the European modes of salutation they make themselves perfect. The benevolent exertions of Governor Macquarie have induced some of these people to send their children to a School

which he has formed for their reception and instruction. The little creatures have been taught to read and write, with a readiness truly astonishing, and in the hands of Providence let us hope they may be instrumental in civilizing their countrymen. Pray pardon the partiality of a native for native subjects.

Your sincere, tho' unknown

Elizabeth Macarthur

Source: Macarthur Onslow, *Macarthur's of Camden*, p. 310.



38 *Eliza Bent to Macquarie and the Honours of War Paid in Cash*

Ellis Bent, as Judge-Advocate, arrived with his wife and child on the same ship as Macquarie, with whom a friendship developed. But he was soon followed by his brother, Jeffrey Hart Bent, as first judge. The latter was probably the least likeable official to reach our shores and inspired his gentler brother (though not so gentle as is often claimed—on which see his letter journal) to set the whole colony by the ears.

Eliza was not very pleasant either (as is evidenced by Ellis's letter journal, in which he describes her attitudes to and treatment of her servants and her spiteful treatment of an innocent assigned servant), but probably her nastiest feats were inspired, or sharpened, by the strong influence her brother-in-law exerted, even if the denial of their too-close relationship after Ellis's death is not true.

Apparently the rumour, current in London, was widespread; a friend of Piper's wrote to him to pooh-pooh it. John Macarthur saw the letter and filed it away for reference. Eliza's reluctance to leave the colony and her brother-in-law's support are quite easy to understand without it.

The final conflict with the Governor fills an unusually large number of pages for the reporting of a female's quarrels to the home authorities; and, unforgivably, unfortunate servants and assigned convicts suffered her spite.

After Ellis's death Eliza continued to occupy the official residence which his successor, Judge-Advocate Wylde, wished and was entitled to occupy and so avoid paying rent elsewhere—for Eliza's benefit.

In this letter to Macquarie, who with his secretary (Campbell) bore the brunt of her letter bombardment, Eliza's claws are unsheathed and razor sharp.

Your sentiments have been conveyed to me in a Letter from Mr Campbell, and, in reply to the want of explicitness in my letter, I may say that the discussion has principally arisen from want of Candour and explicitness on your part; in a Letter to Mr Justice Bent, you stated that Mr Judge Advocate Wylde had forborne, at your request, to insist upon the

Occupation of the House; but you never thought proper, either to apprise me, or to state for how long a time you had requested such forbearance nor what limits you had fixed for my Occupation of the House.

I should have thought it easy to discover that my wish was to remain till near my departure from the Colony, and I had some hopes that I had said sufficient to prevent my removal being pressed, and to induce your acquiescence.

Had you informed me what arrangements you had made with Mr Wylde on his arrival, or then apprized me what was the longest period that I could be allowed to retain possession of the House, I should have made my arrangements accordingly; as it is, I have been led to form very different ideas upon the Subject, and kept in total ignorance of your sentiments as to the terms of my stay till Mr Wylde applies to you to farther his views which I think are ungenerous. No arrangements have been offered to my acceptance by Mr Wylde; nor any, that those who had a proper consideration for themselves, could for a moment attend to; and the failure of the attempts you have mentioned might have been easily anticipated.

It will be recollect that I have never had even a formal Notice to quit, and I may say such Notice to remove at a particular time was all that was necessary to have been given on your part, would have required no correspondence on mine; and my Non compliance with it, it would have remained for you to take the necessary legal steps which Mr Wylde, I dare say, would not be backward in urging.

After having thought proper Personally to address me on the subject, I scarcely expected that you would carry on the Correspondence through the Medium of another Person; had the Discussion began with an official Communication by that Channel, I should not have had any feelings about it; But I do consider that your change of Mode shows a want of that politeness I should have expected from any Gentleman, and which I was particularly entitled to have met with from Governor Macquarie.

I think that I had always a right at least to a reasonable Notice to remove, in which light I view your later Communication. It is the first Notice I have received from a proper Authority; Written assurance or acknowledgements of the kind mentioned by you are utterly unusual. If I do not deliver up the House after proper Notice and at the proper time, I know that I must sustain the legal consequences; But I think that it would have been no improper exercise of your patience, if you had waited till my Non-compliance had been manifested, before you had authorised the use of threats to extort unheard of declarations.

I do feel the utmost indignation at the threats you have thought proper to dictate, which cannot be justified as the formal language of an Offical Notice, and which you ought to feel shame for having caused to be addressed to the Widow of the late Judge Advocate. With regard to that part of my Letter which you are at a loss to Comprehend, I alluded to the act of Mr Wylde's application for an Advance to him of a part of his Salary before it became due; and the steps taken by you in consequence considered as placing him under a Pecuniary Obligation; such circumstances I believe not to be a mere report, and I do not think that you will declare that it is totally unfounded.

I am, &c.,
ELIZA BENT

Source: HRA I, 10, 209 ff. Her capitals.



39 . . . *an Honest Livelihood*

This straightforward request is a relief after the concentrated venom of the surviving Bents, and serves as a reminder that numbers of innocuous, if not legally innocent, prisoners settled into their new life and carried on in reasonable security their pre-transportation lives. The often paternalistic framework of rules allowed them small privileges, and emboldened them to ask with confidence for still greater relaxation of the law on their behalf.

1817

The humble Petition of Frances Hart and Jane Ward . . . Your petitioners are sisters and were *tried* at the Assizes at Nottingham in the month of March 1815 for having taken a small quantity of British lace of little or no value, which being found in the possession of Your Petitioner Frances Hart, both Your Petitioners, in consequence of their relationship and their residing together, were sentenced to transportation and arrived here in the ship Mary Anne, Captain Arbuthnot.

That from the respectability of Your Petitioners' connections and their uniform good conduct the strongest recommendations were made in their favor, even by their prosecutors themselves, so Messrs Milne and Co the owners of the ship Mary Anne, thro' whose kind officers, they were treated with every indulgence, are in sanguine hope of receiving a Mitigation of their Sentence from His Majesty's Government at Home, and in the favorable recommendation of the Captain and Surgeon Superintendent of the Mary Anne, it was Your Excellency's pleasure to bestow upon them the indulgence of Tickets of Leave.

That Your Petitioner Frances Hart has since her arrival here married an Industrious man and has one child, and Both Your Petitioners are desirous of Embarking in Business in order to obtain an honest livelihood, Your Petitioners therefore must humbly supplicate that Your Excellency will be pleased to bestow upon them the indulgence of Emancipation, and Your Petitioners as in Duty Bound will ever Pray

Frances Hart
Jane Ward

Source: Mitigation of Sentence, 1812-18 (R. 1228, Archives of New South Wales).

40 *The Parson's Postbag*

The Hassalls' penchant for hoarding every scrap of paper they received has provided the richest treasure as a record of life in this period. The women contributing were mostly Hassall wives and daughters. And later trivia on all subjects, addressed to Thomas Hassall, have been preserved, including pleas from parishioners, Sunday School pupils, and old flames.

The first note, from a Mrs Hall, written about 1817, probably from the then bush settlement of Blacktown, is a reminder of the anguish of young

mothers of sick children without doctors or proper food or the support of more experienced women.

Alce (Alice) Bromoley, writing to her husband, a shepherd on a Hassall property at Macquarie Grove, near Camden, and later speared to death by Aborigines, is one of the two women writing from England on the condition of those left behind by the convicted men. Hers has a special interest in the details it gives of the effects of the early Industrial Revolution on an English family in a small village.

Sarah Arndell's little note of invitation to Thomas Hassall, probably from the family grant at Cattai, is trivial in itself, but deserves its place because of the tribute paid to her at the time of her marriage by the visiting London Missionary Society investigators who appointed her husband, L.E. Threlkeld, as missionary to the Aborigines at Lake Macquarie. They considered her an asset because of her known care of the native people, a rare female interest at the time. Sarah was the daughter of Thomas Arndell, First Fleet surgeon, whose estate was in the Windsor district. Her genteelism ('young ladies') suggests the influence of her convict mother, Elizabeth Burleigh, rather than that of her father, a connection of the Duke of Norfolk.

Elizabeth Macarthur junior's note, written to Anne Marsden, has two points of interest. Anne, soon to be Thomas Hassall's wife and prototype clergy wife in the Victorian tradition, has already undertaken the duties her mother never dreamed of, and the planned evening walk is a surprising tribute to the safety of Parramatta in Macquarie's time: to walk the distance between the two homes would certainly not be as safe today.

Mary Cover Hassall was one of the elder children, and this letter, rambling, gushingly pious and covertly malicious, not only emphasises the growing atmosphere of forced religiosity but shows the dangers of bad influence on the growing girls in the narrow and confined circle in which many moved. Gilchrist, transported for forgery, was one of the educated convicts the Hassalls tried to help by giving him the sheltered position as tutor, which he seems to have abused. Mary appears to have been involved in an unfortunate entanglement with him but glosses over any encouragement she may have given him. She later becomes Mrs Lawry (an account of her death closes this series). A letter from Gilchrist's father, expressing shame at his son's lapse, is bound in the same volume of letters.

Anne Hassall (Mrs Thomas) wrote and received a stream of letters from her younger sisters, and was their confidante in their complicated love affairs. Most interesting is the picture of this small, closely knit world, and the bewailing of the fatigue and boredom that Marsden's intrigues and self-justification entailed.

[? Blacktown c. 1817]

. . . Mrs Hall's best respects to Mr Tho['] Hassall will esteem it a particular favour if he is going to Parramatta and will send to request his Mother to spare her two or three pounds of Arrow Root for her baby who cannot eat anything else and she has not a bit left, if Mr Tho['] Hassall is not going to send soon will thank him to let Mrs Hall know.

Alice Bromoley to her husband:

Rockdale, July 24, 1816

Dear Husband,

This comes with my Kind and best Respects to you hoping this will find you in good Health as it leaves us all at present thanks be to God for the same and we are quite uneasy to Hear from as we expected a letter from you before now their was a Man here a few weeks Since that he had been doing Duty over you That gave us Discriptions how to write to you In the Name of Samuel Holebrook First Division and Said you were in Good Health and We was Glad to hear it as we had Not heard from you of so long and I should be Glad If you would Send us a letter what sort of doeings you have And Descreptions of the place and sort of work you are Mostly Employed with and send us all Perticulars wether you Expect to come home Any sooner than your time.

And I am Situated in the same house where I was and your Daughter Alce goes out spinning And your Son Samuel is at one Abraham Lords Top of Yorkshire street and has been about 12 months and has a very Good place of it learning to weave And your Son Charles goes to a Ingenplace of Working and we are Doing as well as you can immagin And your Father Gives his best respects to you. And is Much the same as you left him and your Brother Thomas and his wife Gives their best Respects to you and your Sister Ann and your Brother Edward and his Wife gives their Respects to you and your Son Thomas & John And Benjamin Gives their best respects to you And your Son George is in France and we do not Expect him Discharged yet.

And Trad Goes very bad here a Great Deal Worse Than it has done for many years and Bradley Pottallow fellow Gives his best respects to you And Desires you to send him a letter of the Discriptions of the Place for he has inquired A Great Deal after you since you went away And So no more at present From your Loving Wife

Alce Bromoley

To Thomas Hassall, shortly before he sailed for England:

Portland Head Thursday Morning

Dear Sir

It is quite uncertain what day our Liverpool friends may come up, therefore do not let this prevent your sleeping at our house to night if you feel inclined to leave Portland Head, we will make you as comfortable as we possibly can. We heard that Mrs Moor and Mrs Drummond were to be up last week and have been expecting them every day since, but perhaps it is only *talk*, for it is a very long promised visit.

I am happy to hear you are all safe at Mr Johnston's. I am sure Mrs Hassall and the young ladies must have been very much fatigued—my brother Thomas will be up to night. We shall expect you also. With best respects

I remain

Yours very truly

haste.

S. Arndell—

Parramatta Monday Morning

My dear Anne

Mary* instructed me to have made an assignation with you last week but a variety of perplexing events occurred to disappoint her. She now talks of going forth 'Some Evening soon' but meanwhile I have a request to make which will admit of no further delay. Some time since my mother spoke to yours about one of the female orphans and I think your mama said she did not quite understand how the affair of applying for one was to be conducted—Can you have the Goodness to undertake it for us. We would wish to be permitted to take a Girl on trial. Mrs Collecott† particularly recommended a young person named Louisa Smith and we should prefer her to any other and I most sincerely assure you that every care would be taken of her.

I hope you will not think me very troublesome but I know no one else to whom I could refer my request.

[Elizabeth Macarthur]

* Mary was the second Elizabeth Farm daughter.

† Mrs Collecott, Matron of the Female Orphan School.

Mary Cover Hassall to her Brother in England in 1819:

. . . My dear, I wish to say many things to you but cannot bring my mind to it. Jehovah has done much for me but I feel a diffidence in speaking for fear of boasting, but Glory be to his holy name he hath raught for me a great Salvation. O yes I often pant for more praise and gratitude, my tongue is too feeble to utter all his praise I would that I was entirely devoted thereto without one word of anything else [? except] the innumerable blessings I have received at his hands. O he delivered me from a wicked and deceitful man Samuel will give you the particulars of the disgrace he has fallen into—if he does not I cannot spoil mine for him, we had not been friends more than 12 months past and am now engaged to Mr Lawry our methodist missionary, he is truly capable of performing his work, a very pious zealous man about your age. Mother loves him dearly, Father too. Perhaps you will be surprised to hear we agree in all things, doctrinile points also, I should like to enter fully into this subject but time and circumstances forbid, it is very seldom we meet without pouring out our hearts to God and begging ardently for direction from on high on such important steps. What slippery paths we walk in every moment Lord! I feel the merits of thy death. O if we are but left for one moment what errors do we fall into! My paper is full, I now commend you to that loving Jesus who doeth all things well, trusting he will fill us full of divine love altho' we are but earthen vessels, fit and prepare us to reign with him above. How vain are all things here below, How false yet how fair. I wish to feel a greater deadness to the world than I do, and a greater conformity to his will, I know my dearest Brother can [? offer up] prayers most fervently for me and all the family, which is a great pleasure to see. Prayer is my delight, I can go again and again, [and] still find more to crave and to praise him for.

My dear I have sent Miss Williams a Otheheitan counterpane and one for you and a peace of their cloth and a Luke's gospel, one of the first printed on that Island. It is Mr Hayward's*

* Mr Hayward was a Tahiti missionary who returned to Polynesia.

present to you. Mrs Oakes† has sent a box of shells You never mentioned how you got or disposed of those you took; this discourages us from sending more let me know if you like more and I will send them. You have a list of a few things to send me before but if it is not quite convenient never mind. I received a long letter from M^r. Ellis in the Hawes, they were well at that period and like the place. She has a son since her arrival, he was very ill a long time with an abscess on his arm, but had quite recovered. Little Mary learning the language very fast. Mr Henry‡ has written you a long letter with all the news. I was on board the Hawes, she is a fine large ship, Mr Hosking§ will have good accommodation. (I am ashamed to introduce a subject which I wished and pushed it off till the last) But I hope to see you my dear Brother with a pious Godfearing young woman as a partner, such as does not like a great cirquit [? circle] of companions never visiting *ball rooms* but wholly devot[ing] her time to God and her family. It is a lamentable case that such is not to be found in the Colony, not one that is suitable for you. Poor Miss Cartwright's modesty,|| fear of evil speaking, forbids me to enter into a detail. She is by this time in England, no doubt but you will hear, her character is gone. Miss Fulton¶ is not like herself, she has nothing spoken against her, but she is quite the gay lady—O my Brother, if you be wise, take my advice and bring a wife, one truly converted to God . . .

† Mrs Oakes, reputed one of the earliest-born white children, married another of the group who became chief constable at Parramatta—see her memorial tablet in St John's, Parramatta.

‡ Mr Henry was the father of Sally Bland—see L. 47.

§ Mr Hoskins was a lay worker brought out by Marsden in 1810.

|| 'Poor Miss Cartwright' was the daughter of the Rev. Robert Cartwright. She, too, seems to have unfortunately been involved with some young man of the group. She returned to Australia about 1830 and married Richard Sadleir.

¶ Miss Fulton was the daughter of a convicted Anglican clergyman sent from Ireland as a prisoner in 1798.

The younger Marsden sisters to Anne (extracts, undated). Mary writes:

. . . a vessel sails for England on Sunday and as usual Elizabeth and I have a great deal of writing for Papa. I was up until ten o'clock last night copying and up at daylight again this morning. Mama and Elizabeth are now at the Orphan School and I have stolen a few minutes from Papa's writing to write you this letter . . .

Elizabeth voiced the same complaint shortly afterwards and in view of the volume of Marsden's correspondence, sermons, pamphlets, etc. his daughters' complaints seem mild:

. . . When Charles left I had so much writing that I am sure I should have been allowed to leave. However I hope to be able to get Charles very soon into the humour to take me and shall really be highly delighted to see you all once again . . . there are still political wars going on as you will perceive from the Papers and I assure you I am quite tired of writing I now feel really sick when I see Pen paper and ink. Poor Papa has really much to contend with and was it not for the support he derives from above must faint under all his troubles . . .

Ann Hassall to her Brother Thomas, at O'Connell Plains in the Bathurst District. She, like her brother Samuel and his wife (*née* Rouse), is surprisingly ill at ease with the pen, compared with the elder children.

Parramatta, July 5th
[? 1826]

My very Dear Brother

Mother received your kind letter today she longs to see you again the news of our dear sisters death was very sudden the shock was almost too much, to think of Brother Lawry being left with three little children but if hour dear sister ad bin left and our dear Brother taken wat would she hav don in a strange land the Lord done all for the best I hope this warning will be maid a blessing to us all. Mother bears it better than we expected hour Friends were all very kind they caime to see us and comforted Mother much.

I sent you by the drayes one quire of paper and now send by Crevan your Black Cloths a Coat wescoat and trowsers I hope they will please.

We have received the bookes from Brother Lawry and Clarkes Commentary for you let me know if I shall send them up.

Giv my lov to Sister Ann Jaimes Catherine and Jane and believe me to remain your loving sister

Ann Hassall.

Source: Hassall Correspondence, MS A 1677, 1-4 (ML): Bromoley, vol. 3, p. 65; Arndell, vol. 3, p. 5065; the Macarthur, vol. 4, pp. 1093-4; Mary Cover Hassall, vol. 2, p. 1517 and vol. 3, pp. 681-3; the Marsdens, vol. 4, pp. 1007-9, 1122; Ann Hassall, vol. 4, pp. 576-9.



41 *An Assigned Convict to her Employer, or a Scandal Made Public*

When Lydia Esden's employer, Nicholas Bayly, sent her letter to Governor Macquarie, and described her as a good worker and a deft, efficient servant, he probably knew that she did not expect much from her request: at best a passionate scene of tears and reproaches before her lover departed and left her to her all-too-usual fate. The British authorities had provided for her support and that of her bastard. The Governor had no jurisdiction over moral misconduct on the slow voyages of convict transports, where supply and demand of males and females made the result inevitable, and the inquiry into events on this voyage of the *Nile* stirred up only a little more mud than usual. The travelling Roman Catholic priests were slandered; their female co-religionists exonerated them; an unusually unpleasant ship's doctor later was refused permission to settle in the colony; and Lydia and her child joined the anonymous mass of her fellow-sufferers in the humble lower ranks of New South Wales society.

Hounoured Sir,

My Feelings Is Mutch Hurt At the Disponding News I Heard From you This morning, That of Being Put off with The Passes, As you have given me But Little Hopes After Promising me you Would. Sir! I hope to god, you Will Not be Worse than your word; For if so I Never Shall Be Happy; And In Respect To my Conduct Dureing my Absence Hope you have Not So Bad An Opinion Of me, As To Think me So Base As To Treat your Kindness with Ungratitude By Behaveing Ill, Or Not Coming Back To the Time you may Think proper To Allow me, Sir, I Promise you Faithfully I will not Incrouch one Hour, Sir! I Do No Wish to take Any Rash Stepts with Mr Hedges, As He Is willing To To make Acknowledgement, providing He As Interview with me. The Reason Things was Not Settled Before Wee parted was Wee Expected I Should have Being Able To have gone To See him with Out Any truble, And being Wholely Out of his power To Come To me makes me to Intreet So Hard For A pass. Sir! If Not Intrudeing, Lett me Once more Beg For A pass to parramatta, and if I cannot goe Any Further, I will send For him to meet me there, Which Will not Hesitate One moment in Executing the Command I know. Wat makes me So Anchous Is the Ship Is goeing A Waleing, And I Am Shure He Will Not Stay But very Little Longer, As He would Loose the Season For it. If He Did, I should mutch wish If you would send For Ann This Eveing, And I will pay the Expence, And Happey so to do, For to suply my place, wile I am gone. Sir! I hope you will Not Denigh me This Request, Or I am A Lost Woman. Sir! I have maney Things To say to him, As he will goe To see my Famley, which will Be Of grate Concolation To me, And Sattisfaction To them. For god sake, Sir, Take It Into Concideration, And grant me my Request, Though I acknowledge It very Early To Ask Favours, Sir, there Seamed To Be a Dought Ariseing Concerning My Being with Child, But I am Not Desceved. It would Be well If I was; Nor Did I Entend To Name; But When you put the question To me, I Could Not Denigh the Truth.

I hope, Sir, you will grant this Request To-morrow Or Tuesday, As then I should Be Able To Return By The Latter part of the week, And Help with the work.

Your Hum'l Serv't,
Lydia Esden

Sir Mary Long most Earnestly Begs you will Not Faile In your promises To Her.

Source: *HRA I*, 10, 319.



42 *The Slightly Improbable Sarah Thornton*

It is not quite clear how Sarah's letter home to English relatives got into the Hassall files, unless she was a humble neighbour of one of the family and gave it to one of them to forward. The letter apparently was written down, in a mood between cynicism and amusement, by a soldier acquaintance, Sgt-General Stibbs. But, whatever its provenance, it does not ring true. The picture is too idyllic. No Australian can quite envisage the scene.

Perhaps it was touched up by some newspaper editor; but as it stands it is good fun.

August 1820

Myself & my husband have had many hard struggles to gain the means of an honest livelihood. To accomplish it we have worked night & day. I thank God that he has crowned our endeavours with success. I rose early in the mornings & went to market bringing home my articles on my head, to furnish my shop to the best advantage. With the greatest care of our little profits, & the greatest frugality in house-keeping we collected together a small sum sufficient to buy a little house. I then applied to the Gentlemen of the Colony,* for a Licence; which they not only granted, but said they would assist me & my husband in any way in their power, as they had noticed our industry & that we associated with none but persons of good character. This was very gratifying to me, and I thank heaven our efforts have answered our expectations.

I often wish, my dear friend, you could see our little family & they playing round me, while I am milking my cows, or making my bread, so that my voice could be heard by the young people in England, to deter them from evil ways & encline them to keep the path of virtue & honesty, that they might not come to this wretched country where so much evil abounds—For though I have by a regular line of good conduct, & by great privations arrived at a state of comfort, not one in twenty who is sent here, obtains even the necessaries of life by their own industry, independent of support from the Government. I now intreat your application at the office of the Secretary of State, to enquire whether I am to remain here for life. I am told by a friend that came from England, that my sentence was only for seven years, & that I could once more return to my Native Country. O! do not neglect to make the enquiry. Think what it is to be an exile for ever from our friends and relatives, who are dear to our hearts—Often with an overflowing heart & a tearful eye, do I think of you and the many endearing hours we have passed together with those other friends of our infancy & childhood. Yet I still feel happy in the thought, that I have friends at the immeasurable distance, by whom I am still held in esteem though deprived of the blessing of their society—O my dear friend once more I conjure you by all that is dear to you & myself to make the enquiry, that if possible I may enjoy the hope of seeing you & my other relatives once more &c &c . . .

* The 'Gentlemen of the Colony' is an exaggeration: all requests were still handled by the Governor and his secretary.

Source: Hassall Correspondence A 1677⁴, p. 1607.



43 Cloven, not Crested: Eliza Walsh Stands for Sex Equality in 1821

Eliza Walsh may not have known of Elizabeth I's outspoken defence of female courage ('I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a King, and of a King of England too.'), but

her sentiments were the same. It was standard colonial practice for a gift of land, or even money, to be provided for marriageable young women as a recognised supplement for the father's inadequate salary. Eliza, sister-in-law of the unpopular and inefficient Assistant Commissary, Frederick Drennan, had not expected a refusal to her request. Macquarie had given no reason. Eliza appealed to Commissioner Bigge, who saw a chance to strike again at the Governor. Macquarie, in reply to his inquiry, gave the lame excuse that grants were for women about to be married, and that Miss Walsh did not qualify. The matter was reopened with Brisbane, and, at the suggestion of his Colonial Secretary, Frederick Goulburn, referred to Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State. In 1826 Bathurst told Governor Darling, 'I am not aware of any reason why females, who are unmarried, should be secluded from holding Lands in the Colony.'

The matter was finally settled in her favour by Bathurst. Her original grant, at Cabramatta, was exchanged for one for her husband in the Hunter Valley. It was the longest struggle conducted by a woman with the home authorities, and it found a place in the printed *Historical Records of Australia*. Justice had triumphed.

Wooloomooloo
19th Jan^y 1821

Sir,

I do myself the Honor to acquaint you that in consequence of being informed that His Excellency the Governor has been in the habit of granting land to Females, and having already some Stock by me, and the means of purchasing more, I was induced to request He would be pleased to grant me a portion of Land which would enable me to proceed on a larger scale than at present with my view of cultivating and rearing stock, which would not only tend to my own benefit ultimately but must be of considerable advantage to the Colony. I enclose to you a copy of my Letter to him, with his answer, and I leave it to yourself sir to take any means in this affair which may appear to you, to be grounded in justice.

It is however incumbent upon me to state that the Governor lately granted land to Mrs Ward, Mrs Gore* and to Mrs Allen, wife of the Deputy Commissary General who was here previous to my landing in the Colony and it does not appear altogether a just measure to exclude Ladies from making use of their money for the benefit of the Colony in consequence of their sex, nor can it be deemed a real objection that a Lady should not be able to conduct a Farm as well as a Gentleman.

I remain, sir, &c
(Signed) Eliza Walsh

* Mrs Ward was a widow with a large family, who first held some small post (presumably out of compassion) and then received a land grant; Mrs Gore, the wife of William Gore, formerly Provost-Marshal.



44 *The Embarrassments of an Employer*

The covering letter sent to F. Goulburn, Brisbane's Colonial Secretary by Elizabeth Pitt, widow of one of Mrs Mary Pitt's sons, and daughter of Macquarie's old friend Mrs Hannah Laycock, is another example of the curious relationship between humane women employers and their assigned servants, especially those awkward people, the educated prisoners. Charles Darwin, writing of Australian social conditions at the time of the *Beagle*'s visit, recorded the discomfort which apparently few of his contemporaries felt, the sense of being served by former social equals, on whom the master now had the power to inflict humiliation and physical pain. Mrs Pitt apparently became caught up in the problems of an unusual man.

She concludes by asking for an answer. One wonders what Marchment did to have an Earl, the clergy, and the inhabitants of both a town and a vicinity united in intercession.

24th August, 1821

Sir

The accompanying letter and Petition in favour of Robert Marchment who was my Deceased Husband's Permanent Servant was received by the last vessel from England. I have considered it proper to enclose them to you and as the Petition is signed by the Earl of Ailesbury and the clergy and principal inhabitants of the Town of Marlborough and its vicinity, I hope it will obtain the favourable Consideration of His Excellency. I have the pleasure to Certify that the Man's conduct while in our Employ was most unexceptionable, that he is now in the service of my deceased Husband's Sister (Mrs Lucy Wood), where he has maintained the same good character.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your obedient Servant

E. Pitt.

Source: CSIL, 1821, under 'Marchment' (4/1750, p. 71, Reel 2167). The Archives index notes that R. Marchment aged 14, a soldier, was transported for rape.



45 *Elizabeth Macarthur to Miss Kingdon*

The departure of the Macquaries had brought home to Elizabeth Macarthur the work of her enemy—change. In February she had warned her friend of the danger of the view, commonly held in England, that fortunes

could be made in the colony by young men arriving without capital. It was not so. Land near towns was already too expensive, the best areas were already taken, and the cost of everything would soon exhaust any money there had been.

Basic rations were laid down in government rations, but often, as by the Macarthurs, supplemented as incentive.

Extracts

1822

. . . If we could persuade ourselves to live together as shepherds . . . But we must have a number of imported luxuries. Even our servants will have tea, sugar, and other things, which many of them have never in their former lives been accustomed to indulge in . . .

She liked the new Governor's family. Lady Brisbane, an heiress, had brought her sister, Elizabeth Makdougall, to stand between her shyness and delicacy and the demands of her official position. The Brisbanes were the richest of the early Governors, and he hyphenated his wife's surname with his own.

. . . Lady Brisbane and her sister Miss Makdougall are gentle and amiable—perfectly unaffected in their manners and habits, yet possessing all the requirements of well born and well educated persons . . . The ladies are fond of and live in great retirement. They mix little in society and give none of the large entertainments Mrs Macquarie used to do.* They have a Dinner Party once a week. Their table is set out, and served in a manner superior to anything we have yet seen in the Colony. Lady Brisbane has a good piano, on which she occasionally plays, and accompanies the instrument with her voice. Miss Makdougall plays the harp, and Mr Rumker the piano in turn.†

A few years later, when the Brisbanes left, Elizabeth lamented:

These changes are very painful for me, who am too advanced in life, to look forward with any satisfaction to making acquaintances . . . more amiable, more unaffectedly right-minded persons we cannot expect to succeed them . . .

Of Lady Brisbane she gives a thumbnail portrait:

Her nursery was her occupation and delight . . .

* The Bents sneered at the Macquaries' style as parsimonious.

† Rumker was the German astronomer who, with Dunlop, was brought out by Brisbane at his own expense to help in his work at the Parramatta Observatory.

Source: Macarthur Onslow, *Macarthurs of Camden*, pp. 454, 456.



46 Elizabeth Mitchell Presents a Conundrum to the Colonial Secretary

This letter, ridiculous though it is, reads like a genuine effusion, and is a commentary on the absurdities of the convict system. Elizabeth Mitchell's phraseology is foolish, but her dilemma was probably real. The point of the letter in the general scene is the trust felt by ordinary people in the benevolent paternalism of the government officials.

So now for the deeply offended lady:

To His Excellency Sir Thomas Brisbane KCB
Captain General and Governor in Chief in
and over the Territory of New South Wales
and its Dependencies

&c. &c. &c.

The Humble Petition of Elizabeth Mitchell
Prisoner of the Crown
Most Humbly Sheweth

That Petitioner arrived in this Colony on the ship Lord Melville 1817, and has since received the Indulgence of a Ticket of Leave:—

That Petitioner became acquainted with one William Freeman: that after repeated conference with the said William, a more social intercourse was the consequence, and he offered himself to the Petitioner in marriage; that a mutual and joint interest ensued, but that it came out previous to the solemnisation of Marriage, and it was intimated to Petitioner that the said William had a Wife and Daughter in England, when of course the intended marriage was set aside, *pro tempore*, until further satisfaction could be obtained thereupon:—

That Petitioner and the said William cohabitated together for more than five years and lived in Peace and Tranquility after the manner of man and wife, awaiting the issue of certain letters, wherein the said William had addressed a friend in England to disprove the story so circulated previous to Petitioner giving her assent to the said marriage and that Petitioner in the interim allowed all transactions to pass in the name of the said William Freeman, who alike became responsible for all Charges and Disbursements:—

That it transpired, that in the year 1821, the Court visited Van Diemen's Land, and the said William was called thither in the office of Clerk to the late Thomas Wylde Esq, late Clerk of the Peace; that Petitioner received the most flattering letters bespeaking true regard, anxiety at the absence, and condoling, observations of fond expectancy on the next meeting:—

That Petitioner finds it necessary to observe, that she left in England on her departure therefrom, a Daughter who had arrived at the years of maturity and for whom she held a maternal regard; and at the same time begs leave to state, that she had caused her said Child to be carefully instructed to a useful knowledge of the Needle, and that she was capable of earning an honest livelihood in England thereby:—

That Petitioner most humbly relates and acknowledges, that her said Daughter Hannah made repeated applications to the Lord Sidmouth for permission to come to the Colony, and that, in the wisdom of his Lordship, all her efforts were ineffectual thro' the proper medium:—but that her said Daughter contrived to come to this Colony on the ship

Midas, by the plausibility of her story to Mr Joseph Underwood and the said passage money was subsequently paid by the said William Freeman to the amount of £60 in the Character of Step Father to the Daughter of Petitioner:———

That it now falls to the painful duty of Petitioner to endeavour to depict a Scene of Depravity scarce ever evinced or recorded by the Case History of this Colony; viz That some time after the arrival of her said Daughter at Sydney the Conduct of the said Daughter was unseemly to Petitioner, and that on scrutinising and watching she discovered that a Criminal Connexion was said to have taken place at Van Diemen's Land, and Petitioner actually detected the same at Sydney, when she immediately discharged her from the house, altho' for motives of delicacy, did not publicly expose the Cause for so doing:———

That Petitioner had to lament the Criminal Intercourse which she repeatedly intercepted, but which she could not prevent, the said William supporting her said Daughter, and cohabiting with her, and at the same time residing with Petitioner in the Habit of a Husband———that Petitioner was compelled to withdraw from this Scene, and in Consequence that the said William Freeman chose rather the society of the Daughter than that of Petitioner, and is at the present moment living in open adultery with the said Hannah to the detestation of all honest and honourable Society and the open scandal and reproof of the Colony, yet nevertheless publicly persevering in the said infamous line of conduct as herein-before set forth;———*he the said William Freeman* being in good repute as an able Assistant in his line of profession (with mr Solicitor Rowe) and a Ticket of Leave Man; and she the said Hannah, having the advantage of *arriving free* in this Colony altho' in a Clandestine manner, and not sanctioned by His Majesty's Government.———

May it therefore please His Excellency Sir Thomas Brisbane KCB to pardon the liberty hereby taken, and to accept the annexed Certificates and Signatures in proof of the within Contained Statements———

That Petitioner could relate such facts as would make the human mind recoil from the mention of———

Petition most humbly prays———

That it may please His Excellency Sir Thomas Brisbane KCB to take the above into his desired and serious consideration;———and may His Excellency be graciously pleased to act thereupon as in His Wisdom he may deem expedient and should it meet the approbation of His Excellency to order the said Hannah the Daughter of Petitioner to be removed from the Colony, or otherwise from the Town of Sydney, and Petitioner, as well as Society in General, as in duty Bound,

Will ever Pray

Dated Sydney August 14, 1822

Source: CSIL. Aug.-Sept. 1822.



47 *Poor Sally Henry (Mrs William Bland)*

A few years after whatever unfortunate circumstances had been hinted at in Mary Cover Hassall's letter (L. 40), the tight little Parramatta community had been rocked by a more serious and more public scandal. Sarah Bland,



Dr Bland's House, Pitt Street, in the 1850s, by F. Terry.

wife of the much older, universally respected, ex-Indian army surgeon transported for killing his man in a duel, eloped with a ship's officer. Bland challenged him to a duel, but he left New South Wales, and the erring wife travelled with some missionaries—the 'dear sister and brother' of her letter—on their journey to one of the mission stations of the Pacific. On route via New Zealand to Polynesia she wrote Thomas Hassall, whom she had known all her life (and who had proposed to her, and been refused, some years before), two very disingenuous letters. She feigned penitence and piety, but added the very malicious insinuations contained in this, the second of them.

Private

New Zealand April 23 1822

Dear Sir *

I should not write by this opportunity where it not for the sake of your sister Eliza, she will have an offer of marriage soon, as you value her happiness enquire into the youth's character. *Beware* from what I have seen and heard I am sure (without the Almighty changes his heart) he will not make a good husband. Perhaps I commit a breach of hospitality in saying so having received kindness from the family, but the friendship I feel for yours overpowers these feelings, if I act wrong allow the anxiety I feel for the welfare of all your dear family to pleas as an excuse.

I have read those Books you kindly sent me with much pleasure and I trust profit. May I entreat you not to forget your unfortunate friend in your prayers at that throne of grace, at the same time remember one who lives in Sydney,* may the Almighty change his and my wicked heart for the sake of our dear redeemer.

My dear sister and brother desires to be remembered to you they are not very well, but are very kind to me, indeed I have met with kindness from all on board, Mr & Mrs Williams are pious folks. I often have some good conversation with them and also brother Ward who is a pious young man. What am I to say everyone is better to me than I deserve, I have my father's, and poor injured———[presumably, Dr Bland's] pardon, I can only want the Almighty's then I shall consider myself fortunate.

Wishing you every happiness in this, and a happy meeting with all our dear friends in the next, I remain

Your unworthy though grateful

Sarah Henry

Do not forget to write by every opportunity your good advice will always be received with heartfelt gratitude.

In hast

* The 'one who lives in Sydney' is obscure but probably was her brother, who was also reported as 'vicious'. On Sally and her brother see A.T. Yarwood, *Samuel Marsden*. Sally died young and Dr Bland remarried happily and more suitably.

Source: Hassall Correspondence vol. 2, p. 595.



48 *The Patient Griseldas*

Anne Thompson takes the hard way of agriculture and Mary Barret lives in poverty.

These petitions, taken from many in the archives, illustrate the needs and difficulties of that group which, inaugurated by Phillip as an incentive to reform, had been a *bête noire* of colonial officials ever since. Instead of rehabilitating the prisoner husbands, the wives had them assigned and jointly set up still more public houses. But not all were so lucky. One of the two such unlucky ones presented a problem which called for Darling's deliberate ruling. The result of the letters of which these are a sample was his final, and humane, decision scribbled on the back of Mary Barret's petition.

The Humble Memorial of Anne Thompson

Respectfully Sheweth

The Memorialist came free into this Colony in the ship Broxbury, Eight Years ago, that her husband Matthew Pearson Thompson came to this Colony in the General Hewitt, under sentence of fourteen years Transportation Ten of which he has served in March next, have a family of five children, four [whom she lists] born in the Colony. Memorialist has this last four years Rented part of the late Governor Bligh's Farm at Pitt Town whos time Expires in January next. Memorialist has 17 Head of cattle, one Horse 30 Pigs and Impliments of husbandry also grain. Memorialist Therefore humbly prayeth that Your Excellency would be pleased to permit her and her Husband to settle on a Farm at the Lower Branch has Memorialist has no Run for her Stock a Renter of Land has no claim to the Common at Pitt Town. Memorialist's Cattle was ordered of the Common by the Trustees of the Common some time ago. Memorialist Cattle are the chief support of her family. Memorialist does not wish to put Government to any other expence whatever. Should Your Excellency be Graciously Pleased to grant the Prayer of Memorialist, her Husband and Government Servant would be falling the timber untill the ensuing harvest, this Crown Land is Situate at the lower Branch and Bounded by John Bariell's Farm, to him promised by the late Governor Macquarie but not measured. Memorialist prayeth should if it please Your Excellency to allow the Land to be granted either in her son's name or her Husband's Name, whose time expires from Sentence in four years and Memorialist as in duty bound will ever Pray.

Anne Thompson.

Blighton

Pitt Town 24 Sep^r 1822

Name and Age of Memorialist's Children.

William Pearson Thompson	13 years 6 months
Elizabeth	7 . do
Anne	5 . do
Jane	6 months

The application of Mary Barret presented more difficulties and gave the meticulous and just Governor Darling cause for thought. Her petition was referred to the Pennant Hills superintendent, who stated that Barret could not do his work by day and earn enough at night to support a family. Colonel Dumaresq, then in charge at the mills, added a note that a good sawyer could not be spared. Barret had previously been troublesome, but his wife's arrival had settled him. Her petition:

Setteth Forth

That your Excellency's petitioner Mary Barret a free born subject, wife of John Barret Crown Prisoner who came into the Colony per ship Guildford in the year 1818, under a Sentence of Transportation for life, and that the husband of the said Mary Barret has been the whole period in the employ of government, upwards of Eight years, now employed a Sawyer at Pennant Hills Establishment—

Petitioner most humbly entreat your Excellencys most favourable and humane Consideration to extend your Excellencys Clemency towards Petition[er] by granting to her the indulgence, to have her Husband, the said John Barret assigned to her which indulgence, will be enabled to support herself and Child, petitioner will in duty bound to pray.
May 20th 1826.

Each petition formed a dossier—petition, references, comments by employer, magistrate, clergyman. Finally, here, the Governor added a minute outlining policy which he saw was required by the abnormal circumstances:

'It appears only just in such cases as this, that Govt. should afford some assistance to the Wife and Children—if the Family came out from England, it is brought out by Govt.—if the Wife marries a convict, it is done with the Consent of the local Govt.—the Govt. is therefore bound in some degree, to afford those facilities which will enable the man to maintain his family. If the man is a sober industrious man, his Wife being free, he should be assigned to her—that he may work for their support—if he is a man of bad character, to whom it would be improper to grant such indulgence, or if on the other hand, he is a deserving man, whose services cannot be conveniently dispensed with by the Govt. it would only be just on the part of Govt. in both these cases, to allow the wives and Children Rations—or in the latter, to make a reasonable renumeration for the work or services of the man.'

In short, special N.S.W. conditions gave humble women in the Colony a place in the economic scheme, which, albeit lowly, their English counterparts did not possess.

Source: CSIL, Memorials, 20/5/1826.



49 *Janet Ranken to her Sister-in-law*

Nine months after she arrived in Australia, Janet Ranken wrote to her sister-in-law to tell her of their plans to move to Bathurst, an area across the Blue Mountains where Macquarie had been reluctant to allow settlement except for the chosen few.

Petersham
November 1822

Since writing to you in September George has decided upon taking up his grant at Bathurst, five miles from the town, the country there pleases him so much. We find that this place is far too near Sydney; it is getting quite a staging for travellers, and a drive for the town people, so that I am too often taken from my household concerns. Kelloshiel is to be the name of our new home. The journey to it will be a very long one, but I am as strong as ever I was, and I look forward to the going over those high mountains with much pleasure. But still I shall be very sorry to leave Petersham, where I have been so happy.

[1824, from Bathurst]

. . . We are very gay in this quarter at present. There are two young men just arrived from England, looking out for grants of land. Our friends, Mr Icely [later of Carcoar] and Colonel Balfour, [C.O.] of the 40th Regiment are all here just now and tomorrow we expect one of the Macarths and Mr Glenne. You would be amused to see how the strangers are put up for the night in these remote parts of the colony, some lying on shake downs, some on sofas, and some I don't know where, perhaps to sleep out, like the unfortunate Nebuchadnezzar, to sleep in the fields!

Source: C.G. Ranken, *The Rankens of Bathurst*.



50 *New Light on a First Fleet Prisoner*

Elizabeth Macarthur to her son John: This extract throws a sudden light on an unknown woman, and adds substance to the legend of educated and well-connected prisoners, though in this case at a remove, since she was an upper servant's child. Unfortunately Elizabeth's difficult writing makes

it almost impossible to identify the main clue to her identity, the name of the first husband.

Parramatta 7th June 1824

My beloved son

I inclose you a letter addressed to me by a Mrs Marr, who goes to England a passenger in the [? Midas] with one of her sons, perporting both to return again to this country. The letter you will say, is a curious production—truly an original, as is the writer—She is very desirous to see you, and will probably wait upon you at your Chambers. I shall therefore briefly tell you, who she is, & sketch her character. She is the *foster sister* of the present Earl of Winchelsea, by whom she is still patronised, her mother & father were very many years servants in the family of the late Lady Charlotte Finch, his Lordship's mother*—the subject of my letter was born in the family—brought up in it and remained until some unhappy occurrence led her astray, & she was tempted from one false step to another, which finally led to her being sent hither, *a convict*. She came at the first settlement with Governor Phillip—I remember her well at my first arrival, I used to occasionally employ her in needle work. She was then rather pretty, very volatile, & good tempered, married to a man named Trellim. He died. Her second husband named Driver by whom she had several children, also died—and she married a very decent tradesman, named *Henry Marr*, a clever person, and one of the steadiest retail dealers in Sydney—this is the third trip the old lady has made to England, having been for many years a free person. She is very clever as a tradeswoman & has a remarkably clear head—Mr Jones knows her well—she has lately buried her two Daughters, both of whom were respectably married. Grief on this account, and a letter she tells me she has recently received from ‘the Earl’ induces her once more to visit old England—She leaves her husband—Mr Henry Marr to carry on business—with I believe one of her sons—& some grandchildren they take charge of—So much for Mrs Marr—I should like Mr Satt to see her if he should chance to be in town—as this is a letter—distinct from colonial narrative, I shall take the opportunity of noticing in it—our entire satisfaction in the choice of the various articles furnished by Mrs Harris which we have received by Edward—everything has been carefully put up, specifically marked for the purpose designed for—good in quality—and not, *we think*, overcharged. It is of consequence, that what we have for our own personal use should be appropriate and of superior quality—we *wear* our things *out*, & therefore wear them long—we have no opportunity of changing *often*. When Edward returns, he will be able to explain all *this*—at this distance from the mother country mere articles of *show*, are ridiculous—our household linen and cloaths, I contend should be of good quality—both because they are better taken care [of]—are in the end, more useful, certainly more respectable—and in the object of *packages* and *freight*, cost no more than trash.

* Mrs Macarthur's recollection seems confused here as the names and relationships she mentions do not tally with the *National Dictionary of Biography*.

Source: Macarthur Papers (1st ser.), vol. 10, letter 9, dated 7 June 1824.



51 Sarah Lawson to her Son

Among neat files of letters to William Lawson's agent in London is one of a different sort. Undated except by internal evidence, badly written and spelled, it is a memorial of one of the remarkable early women. Coming as a convict, Sarah Lawson re-established herself by sheer force of personality in the niche in society (or a higher one) she had forfeited by some early misdemeanour. An early picture suggests gentle origin, which is not contradicted by the poor writing of the letter: many gentlewomen were weak with their pens. But what is established beyond doubt is her sense and strength of character. Lawson met her on Norfolk Island as Sarah Leadbetter, and established her at his estate, later resumed for Prospect Reservoir. There he left her during his frequent absences, capably and without fuss bearing and bringing up her children, and efficiently managing the complex elements of the convict-staffed estate. 'Old Ironbark', William Lawson, accepted the position of commandant at Bathurst, supervised road construction, went to England on business, and spent months on his Mudgee estate. Through all this, Sarah was in command at home. Her competence won unstinted praise from those good observers, the naturalists from de Freycinet's expedition of 1802. This fragment has no beginning.

. . . the mountains he as been over this nine weeks shepherding all his sheep and cattle to Mooge I expect him down next week your father as wrote 3 or fore letters John is writing one to you William is over the mountains with his father Your sisters sends their love to you I see you have wrote for a watch you can tell Mr Sloper to buy you one that is a present from me and in return send me your Likeness by Captain Johnson he returns to New South Wales witch will be in twelve months time, I have bought Rebecca a paino she plaisir very well Hannah and Sophia is learning I hope my dear Boy you will pay attention to your studies books as the sommer you will return to us. The baby died the day you sailed for England all the family is well I hope this will find you the same your father as given up the Command at Bathurst pitt town and Major Marrisets as got it and I assure you I am glad of it

I remain your affectionate
Mother S. Lawson.

Source: William Lawson Papers Misc. MSS. Box 6.2 (PRO, London).



52 Christiana Blomfield and her Mother, Christiana Brooks, of Denham Court

The order of the letters has been reversed, for the later writer, Mrs Brooks, was one of the matriarchs, and her one son and five daughters married

into a number of well-established country families. Captain Brooks had had a bad reputation for ill-treatment on convict transports but had lived it down later on. He and Mrs Brooks settled at Denham Court, which became a centre of hospitality for travellers on the south road through Campbelltown. Their son had a home of his own, and his eldest sister, Christiana Blomfield, became chatelaine of Denham Court. It was she who carried out the mother's wish and built in her memory the church of St Mary the Virgin. Both house and church have been carefully preserved.

Mrs Brooks was an intelligent, happy, well-adjusted woman, with more humour than most of her contemporaries. Her journal (now in the National Library), with its thumbnail sketches of pompous notables, is a delight. She also enjoyed the rare distinction of having her comments on the servant problem recorded by Bigge.

The younger Christiana married an officer in a regiment from India stationed in New South Wales, and both she and her husband wrote a series of letters over the years to his sister and to his aunt. These were privately printed, covering the financial problems of officers whose purchase money for their commissions was their main capital for establishing themselves as civilians. Her letters, particularly in their vivid portrayal of domestic life as well as the appearance and personalities of a number of family members and connections, should be republished for their value to our social history.

From Mrs Brooks, on her Sickbed, to Mrs Piper:

Denham Court
17th February 1825

My Dear Mrs Piper

I have been a very great invalid since my return home with that fashionable complaint *the Mumps* a very painful disorder I can assure you and one that will not allow of opening the mouth for the purpose of eating and scarcely of speaking. I am happy to say however I am getting better and hope in another Meal or two to be out of *Pap Diet* and able to speak my mind.

You may suppose I have not been a very agreeable companion to Mrs Garling,* but she is so quiet and easily pleased that we are very good company altho we do not talk; she has made me a very pretty cap since her sojourn here and I have made an exchange with her of my green one which seemed made on purpose for her.

The weather has been so intolerably warm that it has been impossible to stir abroad, as it was our intention to have gone in a large party to besiege the *Dr's Grapes* we had a sort of half invitation to go and look at them but he has not sent us a taste of them yet.

I long to know how your Party at Mr Balcombe's turned out & if there are to be any more grand doings likely to take place; any word of the *Pic Nic*, and so forth.

Charlotte is I think sorry she did not see more of the Gay Town altho she says, 'Where would I have been happier than at the Point and with the sweet little dears of Children'— Maria is much satisfied with her dolls which are dressed in blue, and pink, and white, and black, and ride in the Gig or Waggon every day; she wishes very much that Eliza could see them.

* Mrs Garling was the wife of the Crown Solicitor, Frederick Garling.



Portrait of Mrs Christiana Brooks 1826-7. Oil on canvas by Augustus Earle, 1793-1838. Reproduced with the permission of the National Gallery of Victoria.

We have heard that Captain Piper got safely home on Wednesday evening, but that Miss Garling did not take the chaise home so we had to bed *its company* at Denham Court. Mr Brooks did not return from Campbelltown till six or seven o'clock and was quite sad that Captain Piper had gone away. He talks of going to Parramatta on Monday to attend the Quarter Sessions, will Captain Piper be there? We had a visit from Dr Nesbit yesterday and one from Murray on Tuesday which is the only company who have visited us since we came up, I fear Mrs Garling will think us a stupid lot. From one of the two we heard that the Mangles had sailed on Thursday last; but from the other we were told she did not get away till Sunday morning or very late on Saturday I suppose the newspaper of today will set us right.

Accept my dear Mrs Piper the kind love of all this family and wishes the same acceptable to all with you. Pray remind John of my Pines and not to forget to give Charlotte's love to all the dear little creatures

[C. Blomfield]

Source: Piper Correspondence, vol. 1, p. 175.

Mrs Blomfield to her Aunt:

16th April, 1824

. . . We cannot commence doing anything to our farm [Dagwood] without our money and we have been living in a state of uncertainty for the last 15 months (not knowing whether we should be obliged to go on with the regiment or not) we wish to get settled with our little ones on a farm of our own.

A little later, after recording the christening of a daughter—they had two sons and two daughters—and mentioning casually that she was again 'expecting' and still at the farm Dagwood, their home in the Hunter district for several years, she launches into a commentary on Australia that curiously confirms the comments of the first chroniclers of New South Wales on fertility figures:

5th January 1828

I think your Aunt Matilda will say we stock our house too fast now, but in this country we are considered very moderate folks. Most people add one to their family every year, and as there are so few disorders fatal to children in this colony, there will in a few years be larger grown up families in this part of the world than any other. My brother, who is a very funny fellow, tells me to make up my mind to two dozen, for within the last year or two he has married into a family of twenty-two, and the mother of them looks almost as young as some of her daughters. They are not now all alive, but I dare say if they had come out here to settle a few years sooner the most of them would have grown up. Their names is McKenzie. After having one and twenty children in England, they came out here when their youngest child was four years old, and to the astonishment of everybody, after being here twelve months, the old lady was confined at the same time with her sixth daughter . . .

At Dagwood there was no school, and their parents' greatest trouble was to keep the children from the bad influence of the farm servants.

She goes on to give a picture of the Coxes. The bridegroom was the son for whom Rebecca Cox had petitioned Macquarie (L. 28).

5th January 1828

. . . I went up to Denham Court rather sooner than I expected, to be present at the marriage of my second sister Jane, which took place on the 18th of April. She was twenty years old, and the husband one year more, so you will say they are a young couple; but he is a very steady, prudent young man and has a good farm and pretty cottage with everything a young couple could wish for to take his wife to. He is the youngest son of Mr Cox who was paymaster to the first regiment that came to this country, and afterwards settled here. He is now a very rich man and has provided for all his family handsomely. My brother in law Edward is the fifth son the old gentleman has seen married, and all are living with in a day's journey of their father. Most of them have now large families, and I suppose Edward and my sister Jane will add to the 36 already bearing the name of Cox before many months pass . . .

The beauty of the Brooks girls became an Australian legend, which makes the word picture of one of them on their looks worth quoting.

Extract from a letter to a relative in England:

5th January 1828

. . . First, then my father is a nice looking old gentleman of 65 and very active for his age. He was 6ft. high when a young man, and I dare say very handsome, but he now loses some of his height by stooping. He is a very affectionate father and I believe particularly fond of me. He has been to see me two or three times, and I am expecting him again soon. My mother I am sure you would like. She is particularly pleasing in her appearance, being tall and thin, with a nice, mild, cheerful countenance, just what you would fancy the good mother of a family who is adored by her children and who is never so happy as when they are all with her. It is to this affectionate mother that we owe every good quality we possess. She has always made herself our friend and never denied us any pleasure that was proper for us, but on the contrary contributed to our happiness in everything, set us a good example and taught us to trust in God. Her health was very delicate when we were young, and many is the hour's misery I have suffered even then for fear of losing so amiable a parent, but since she came to this country she has been gaining strength every year, and now, at the age of fifty, she is as healthy as we could wish, and I trust God will spare both her and my father to us many years. My brother Henry, who is my only brother, is the eldest of us all. He is nine and twenty, but does not look near so old, having a fair complexion, very light frizzy hair and light blue eyes. He is the most generous, good-hearted creature possible, and full of fun. We are quite sorry he married, for we lose his company, which was a great pleasure to us, but I believe he is happy, althought his wife is not exactly what we could wish. Henry is nearly as tall as my father, and I think a very good looking young man. I come next in age, and completed my 26th year on the 15th January (this month). I must leave your uncle to describe me, well assured he will set me off to the best advantage—that is, if he is not lazy. My sister Mary comes next to me. She is three and twenty, not very tall and rather stout, but not clumsy; very light hair and eyes, and a fine set of teeth. I think her pretty, but I may be partial; she is very lively, good tempered, plays very nicely on the piano, and is a favourite with all who know her. She is like Henry, very young looking. She is your uncle's favourite and she is equally fond of him. She was with me in my last confinement and was here

altogether six months, and fine romps your uncle and she had, for you must know he is very fond of romping with the girls. I believe Mary will soon be married to a Mr Wilson, a brother officer of your uncle. He went on with the 48th to India and has just returned. He expects his company every day, when he will, I hope, sell out. I hope she will be happy, for I am sure she will make a good wife. Jane is very like Mary, but not so good looking. She is a sensible, agreeable young woman, and so neat and orderly that we all thought that she would be the old maid of the family, but we were mistaken. It is not always those who have most admirers who are first married. My next sister is exceedingly tall, 5 ft. 8½ in., dark eyes, hair, and complexion, a good figure for so tall a woman, and generally thought handsome. She is nineteen, but has been as tall as she now is this last two years. She is full of glee—just what most merry girls are at her age—fond of dancing and fond of being admired by fine young men. She has just left me, and I miss her very much, for I never knew a better temper. She used to romp also with your uncle and call him little brother Tom, and he used to call her Longshanks. I wish you could join in some of our frolics, for I fancy from your letters you would like a bit of fun as well as my giddy sisters. Next comes Charlotte. She is seventeen, almost as tall as Honoria—she is the last one I have described—and very like her, though not at all good looking. She is an awkward age, neither girl nor woman, a great oddity, and not at present good tempered, but I think her good sense in a year or two will get the better of her temper and perhaps she will improve in every respect. She is very affectionate, and I think myself that is a very good quality. As I know myself what a bad temper is I can make excuses for other people, and I know it can be subdued if we try. My youngest sister, Maria, is just thirteen, an Australian, quite a child, and a pet at home; very like my father and me—large dark eyes, light hair. At present [she] is as wild as a young colt, but I think she will be a pretty girl in a year or two, and (if not spoilt by all) a good girl, for her disposition is good and a very affectionate heart.

P.S.—You can see, my dear Louisa, what a large family mine is—seven of us all alive, and we have never had the misfortune to lose one. I do not think a happier family can be found anywhere. It has been a great comfort to us in this country, where we have been completely without companions; indeed I think there is nothing like home and one's own sisters. When they are not with me I generally get letters from some of them every week, and my mother writes to me once a fortnight, so that I know everything that goes on. The conveyance of letters and parcels is pretty regular between this place and Sydney. There is one packet and several other vessels besides, as this settlement is becoming very populous. We have not many very near neighbours, but we have very good friends a few miles off in Mr and Mrs Close. Mr Close is a very old friend of your uncle's, and Mrs Close is one of the few companions I had in this country besides my sisters. We sometimes spend a few days together now and then, which makes a little change, but our youngsters will not allow us to see each other so often as we might; for in this country, where one's servants are all convicts, we cannot trust them with any safety to take care of our children; but I am never dull at home, for I have plenty to do to employ myself, and as long as your uncle is with me I do not care about seeing anybody else. He does not like leaving home very much, and except to attend the Quarter Sessions or other business at Newcastle (which is our town and seaport) he never leaves the farm.

Source: T.V. and C. Blomfield, *Memoirs of the Blomfield Family* (Armidale, n.d), pp. 51 *et seq.*



53 *Ann (Mrs Anthony) Hordern to her Mother*

The Horderns arrived in Australia in 1825 on the *Phoenix*. Within a few days of landing, Ann's sharp eyes saw her opportunity. Anthony advertised himself as coachbuilder and wheelwright; she opened a haberdasher's shop. A baseless rumour circulated that he was her assigned servant, but their progress was steady. He died in 1869, she in January 1871, leaving both businesses well grounded and a family of four sons and two daughters to carry on their work.

. . . We got into harbor at Sydney March 5, 1825.

We had a most beautiful view of Sydney, it looked very handsome as we lay in the harbor.

The next day we went ashore and had a look at the town. The houses are large and strong brick or stone and here and there is one that looks like a shop.

Trade is middling in general but if people will strive they can get a living middlingly comfortable.

I have one great comfort in Mr Hordern. He is very kind to me and the children and he does all in his power to comfort us and make us happy.

We shall be happy to hear of you my dear parents. I hope the Lord will bless us and make us all happy. Amen.

Pray give our love to all our friends and accept the same yourselves my dear parents.

Believe us, Ever your affectionate children, Anthony and Ann Hordern.

P.S. I wish we had about 10 pounds in your goods that I might begin in a little way. We shall endeavour to sell some of our things and save a little.

If we can buy some wool to send you to sell for us, send the return in stays.

Cotton ginghams, printed muslins and laces are very dear, checked skirts and satin slops and waistcoats fetch a great price. Bonnet shapes, ribbons and sewing silks as well.

I wish you could be so kind as to trust us 10 pound or 20 pound worth of such as I have mentioned at cost price.

We will endeavour to send you over as much wool as in our power for you to sell and pay for the goods with.

The stays must be from 24 to 30 inches, no children's and more 27 and upwards as women's run large and slops thin as it is a warm climate . . .

Source: *North Shore Times*, 6 June 1979 (printing from family papers); reproduction authorised by Mr Marsden Hordern.



54 *Eliza Bent to Piper, or Resentment Recollected*

Earlier, Eliza Bent had done her best to insult Macquarie (L. 38); now it was the innocent Piper's turn. He was by this time a naval officer (in charge of customs duties collection), rich, socially at his zenith, and wishing well to all the world.

Her condescension towards the chaplain, her obvious dislike of her mother-in-law, and her quickness in taking offence over a trifling mistake—it does not seem to have occurred to her that Piper probably believed her still in the West Indies—all make a self-portrait that is not attractive.

Chessington 11th. March 1825
near Kingston Surry

Dear Sir

A few days ago a letter was forwarded to me from the Secretary [of] States Office but not knowing the hand writing & being addressed to M^r. Bent sen.^r I considered it was intended for my mother in law & I redirected it to her; who is now residing at Harpenden, Herts,—but in a post or two she enclosed it to me back again, wherein she says ‘I have just received a letter addressed (through mistake) to Mrs Bent but I am not sorry you sent it as it gives me an opportunity of seeing an instance of real friendliness & benevolence—I shall not make an apology for opening it though it was for you it was intended’—on my perusing it, I found it was a letter from Major Ovens, & that it was *evidently intended for her* & how Major Ovens could think of addressing a letter on such a subject to my Mother in law *when I was* in existence I am at a loss to conjecture; but shall refrain from making any further comments on it.—I believe you knew on my quitting N.S. Wales how anxious I was to have had the remains of my late husband moved into a more suitable situation & Mr Cowper waited upon Governor Macquarie with my wishes on the subject & the answer he received was a total refusal to my request; which was to have him removed into the Church, where indeed, he promised the remains should be placed after a certain time.—therefore I had no alternative & was obliged most reluctantly to submit to his caprice & allow the remains to continue where first deposited: this, Major Ovens was pleased to say ‘I found the remains of my much respected & esteemed friend the late Mr Ellis Bent had been placed *indiscriminately* in the old Burying Ground’. Now I beg to contradict that statement; *this spot* was chosen by himself as it was close by poor Mr Ferguson’s stone, whom he much respected.—

I must say, however laudable Major Ovens’ motives may be in this instance, they are much diminished in my estimation, by the manner in which it has been conducted—I mean with respect to the propriety of the *communication*, to say nothing to the right of Mr —[word illegible] to such a shared referral, & although Major Ovens did not think proper to make the communication to me, I am surprised that Mr Cowper should in such an instance forget what was due for kindness shown him & his family—on all occasions I shewed him & his family particular attention when I was in N.S. Wales: & it was very unkind of him, not to have acquainted me of what was going on with respect to Major Ovens’ intentions—as certainly I was the only person to be consulted in a matter wherein I was so much concerned:—however my feelings may be hurt, I am sincerely glad that the remains of so good a Man, as my husband was, are no longer where they were.—

It is a very long time since I have heard of you I did write to N.S. Wales previous to my going to the West Indies, where I resided three years, & I have been in England nearly 2 years, & on my return I was much gratified, & pleased, to find my dear children so much grown & improved;—I am sure you will be pleased to see them all again, a finer family can not be seen—they are charming children.

Ellis & Robert are of course now grown very much; they are both considerably taller than I am so that they call me their *little Mama* they are receiving a Classical education & bid fair to be clever well informed Men,—my girls are considered to be very handsome, & possessed of excellent abilities: in a few more years I expect them to be well educated & accomplished girls: they all desire to be kindly mentioned—though they cannot of course recollect you.—I sincerely hope that all your family are well; & that M^r. Piper & yourself are enjoying uninterrupted happiness at Eliza Point where I understand you are now residing—thank God, since I returned from the West Indies I have my health very well but while there, I was beginning to feel the ill effects of so injurious a climate which, indeed, induced me in a great measure to leave it; Mr Bent who is Chief Justice is still there & keeps most excellent health, tho', I assure you he takes great care of himself—& never rides out without carrying an umbrella over his head—I am not sorry I have seen that part of the world I found it pleasant as to society there; was select & not, as it used to be, in N.S.Wales—I had many very intimate friends there whom I was sorry to leave behind:—Mr Bent's residence was very near Government House called *Mount ? Sion* which made it very pleasant as were so much there M^r. Riall the Governor's Wife is a very nice lady like woman & we were very united—I met *your* Governors cousin there [Sir Charles Brisbane] Governor of St Vincents he is a gay old Man, but I do not admire his character—he asked me *what sort of a place was N.S. Wales* I told him a much better place than St Vincents. I know your cousin, also there, Col Piper, he was very intimate with us—I drank tea several times at his barracks when he invited several of the officers & their wives to meet me, & before I had a horse of my own I used to ride his charger—poor fellow he is gone too—he had his health very well when he remained at Grenada but soon fell a victim to the fatal climate of Barbadoes.—

I must now end this long [? scrawl] but not without apologising for troubling you with [word blotted out] With kind regards to M^r. Piper

I beg to remain
My dear Sir
Yours very truly
Eliza Bent

To account for my
using black wax—
my brother in law is dead
(Mr Archdeacon Knox)

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 3.



55 *The Children Left Behind:* *Lucretia Hely and Priscilla Wemyss*

These letters have the same wail of sorrow as the petitions later published by Caroline Chisholm in the 1840s.

Mrs Hely is interesting for the list of notables who backed her convict husband's petition for land when he was working as a wharfinger at Pennant Hills. These included Lords Westmeath, Talbot, Cunningham and Kilman, Lady Neta Nugent and the Hon. J. Bourne and Margaret Molesworth. The wife, who arrived free, merely scrawled on this petition 'arrived free'; then she goes on with her own plea. We do not know if the elder children arrived.

1825

Lucretia Hely humbly begs to state that she had permission from government to bring her 4 children with her aboard the ship Woodman but not knowing whether she would like to remain in New South Wales left 2 children behind which she much regrets and implores Your Excellencys indulgence to have them sent to theyr Parents who are able and willing to support them—the following gentlemen in Dublin know where to find the children Thomas Williams Esq Secretary to the Bank of Ireland—Richard Williams—Charles Williams Esq the children's Names are Thomas Hely aged 14 years Francis Hely aged 9 years—for which indulgence Petitioner shall be in Duty Bound to Pray.

Priscilla Wemyss may have been either an early Scottish migrant or a convict accompanied by her husband and younger children. (She is not to be confused with Mrs William Wemyss, who performed the remarkable feat, given local conditions, of forbidding Sir Thomas Brisbane, in writing, to go on inviting Dr Douglas to Government House.) Priscilla's older boy remained in Scotland. A letter from her husband—he was stationed at Pennant Hills—better written and spelled, is frank and to the point. He felt a couple of shiploads of young women would be welcome and would 'find a ready market'. Her plea for the immigration of her relatives and son James ends happily with a letter from him, happily apprenticed in Sydney, to his former guardians, dated July 10th 1841.

Sydney 5th Nov^r 1829

Dear Brother & Sister

This few lins will inform you that I received your kind and walcome letters and was veray happy to hear from you all and it gave me graet plissour to hear that you are all in good health created when you wrote me as this leves me and all the famlay thanks be to God for it hoping this few lins will find you and all the famelay in the Sam and all my old frinds and accquininces Dear Brother I was veray sorray to hear that my dear son had ben taken away from Mr Spers to Glasgow I think that it was a veray Bad Change but I hop long befor this thim that he is Back to Kilmarnach agan and I hop that the nixt Change that he will mack will be to Sydney to his Mother and his Brother and sister I hav ben veray unesay sines I got the letters to hear of my son leving such a Mother as Mrs Spers and going to Glasgow

he his bean a grat Burden to Mr Spers but I will not lat it be anay loss to him but I hav know proper convaens direct to the Clayd but the first vessel that leves this I will sand a beal of Wool hom to Mr Spers if she is going to anay port in the Clayde it is the Buteful Wool that iver I said and will [illegible] and som pursoetes if I can prevail upon anay of the captins of vessels to tack then I hav sant you a few [———] for your wife and children the man that had whar in charg of is the Nam of John Lambay Brig Ametherst Captin Soulter the sam captin that mr Clark [?] Worsen with the Marget of Ayr [all almost illegible] he belongs to Ayr his father was hoserel [ostler ?] in the Kings Arms Ayr he is carpenter Matt in the vessel I hav sant 3 pair to Mrs Humphray and 3 shels to ech of the children which macks 7 pair all twogether and a New Zealand Maet Maet by thim selves a New Zealander with thar fingers and a small peg in the ground tha ar a veray rebust pepel but tha ar still cannebls yet tha Eat one another that tha kill [line illegible] they sparrd thim but tha say that whit man flash is to salt and tha lov one of themselves much Better. I hav descoyrsed with Saverabell of thar sheps on this subject and hav ben in company with Saverel Gentilman that his ben Eay witnes to it thar onselvs that the veray firs Hav ben sandeled for themselves as far as a understand but owing to some of the sheps that knew thim that had Bin in Sydney thar Life has Ben spared I hav Been for going down myself saverel thims to New Zealand ivay opertunty that I could deesir but has [paper torn]

Source: CSIL, Petitions and Memorials re Land, 1825.



56 One of Miss Makdougall's Many Polite Notes

Mrs Macarthur's early description of Brisbane's sister-in-law, Elizabeth, did not differentiate her role from that of the Governor's wife (L. 45). In fact, all the hard work of the position fell to Elizabeth. Anna was both pleasingly domestic and pleasingly decorative. One gets the impression that Elizabeth accepted her lesser role with dignity; she certainly passed her life with the Brisbanes. Perhaps, by some quirk, she was not a co-heiress with her sister, and was thus inherently inferior. Both during her stay and after her return to Scotland she spent much time on polite, unexceptionable little notes: news of Anna's health, especially after her distressing confinements, the health of the babies, reactions to the new arrival, concern over Jane Blaxland's health. The scope of her social activities was not wide, but like Dr Johnson's friend ensured 'the single talent well employed'. This sample brings in yet again the unfortunate native birds condemned to violent or slow death on long voyages through drastic changes in climate.

My dear Mrs Hassall

I received a beautiful pigeon from Mr Hassall some time ago, I pray tell him for which I was very much obliged to him—I have the pleasure of sending you two books,

which I beg your acceptance of—The pretty birds you sent me will be much admired at Home; and the Swamp Pheasants particularly.

Pray accept of our united best wishes for the health and happiness of yourself and all your Family and Believe me to be most truly yours

G. House

Eliz.th Makdougall

Parramatta

15th Nov. 1825

Source: Hassall Correspondence vol. 3.



57 *The Extraordinary Case of Mrs Edwards-Lockaye-Low Key*

The problem of the identity of the convict known under the extraordinary names of Low Key listed in the official records was bad enough; but it also involved his poor innocent Dutch wife and their children. Here it is presented through the letter Lockaye (there seems little doubt of his identification by doctors on the evidence of a badly set broken arm) dictated to his wife for her to send to the Governor. She was probably one of the most foolish women who arrived here, and one of the most completely deluded. She introduces herself in a letter to Secretary of State Huskisson.

Sir,

When through the friendship that subsisted between Admiral Bartie his daughter and officers, and my late Father Mr Petrus Rens at the Cape of Good Hope, I became intimate with the worth of the British Character, and when through reading English Books I comprehended the genius of a people which could make Plausible the improbability of Shylock, I prayed that for my Husband I might have one of this great nation, and although I have met nothing but misfortune since my marriage, I still consider myself happy in the fate which united me to Mr William Edwards, a notary of Cape Town . . .

It was an extraordinary beginning for an appeal, ultimately to the rigid General Darling of all people. The question, never to be finally resolved, was the identity of that husband. Was he the Cape Town notary, or the felon called Low Key? Of all the extraordinary problems the early women devised to bedevil the authorities, poor Elizabeth seems to have found the most bizarre.

On 20 December 1825, in Port Macquarie, Mrs Edwards sat down to transcribe some twenty pages, supposed to be her own composition. By the time it reached Darling, the question was academic; Edwards-Lockaye absconded, escaped by sea, and then committed suicide; and Elizabeth

joined Miss Walsh and Mrs Bent among the female immortals of the Governors' dispatches. A few points from the letter set out:

Sir,

My Husband being transported from the Cape of Good Hope a year ago for quarrelling with Lord Charles Somerset, was sent to this place on a pretence of Young Wentworth that he was a felon called Low Key but several of that thieves' acquaintance having told Dr Moran & Mr Parker whilst we were landing that it was not as I informed Sir Thomas Brisbane who said that if I got their affidavits to that effect we should be removed, so sent them as soon as possible after my return here last month but my arriving when His Excellency had embarked we handed them over to our friend Dr Halloran* for Mr Lithgow to deliver to General Darling to act upon them.

But as I expected to be removed as an act of right and not of grace† I am now obliged to address myself to you to request that Mr Edwards may be allowed to return to Sydney to show you he is not the man—Young Wentworth said he was in which case he must be in a different situation from the felons sent here from England—as in truth he ought to be if his crime and theirs were properly classed . . .

The letter raised fifteen points; Darling rebutted fourteen. Medical evidence had proved to his satisfaction that Edwards and Lockaye were the same. But even his control wore thin, and his report took on an almost hysterical note: 'I saw Mrs Lockaye repeatedly until wearied with her importunities—Mrs Darling also saw her repeatedly.' Darling believed the husband had concocted the story, and deceived his wife as well as everyone else.

Finally the Governor granted £60 for the family's fares back to Cape Town.

* Laurence Hynes Halloran, who claimed to be a clergyman, had been transported with his huge family and was another dubious character.

† In the heat of emotion he forgot that it was Mrs Edwards, not he, who was writing the letter.

Source: Darling Dispatch, 1826 [A] 1196, pp. 181–91.



58 Napoleon's 'Betsey' in Sydney Society

This rather gushing little note to Piper before his financial crash in 1826 is all that remains in Sydney of the flamboyant and light-hearted girl who, in her teens, lightened a few heavy hours for the fallen emperor on St Helena, where her father, William Balcombe, was representative of the East India Company. Later he came to New South Wales as Colonial

Treasurer, and was joined by his wife, his daughter, Lucia Abell, and his granddaughter. Lucia was separated from her husband, and was apparently innocently fascinating to many sorts of men, including Eyre, the later explorer, and, naturally, Piper. She annoyed young women like Emmeline Macarthur, but beguiled Elizabeth Macarthur senior with her gossip and anecdotes of parties. It is rather sad that our last glimpse of 'Betsey' was the finding, by Dame Mabel Brookes, a descendant of the Balcombes, of her distant relative's autobiography, as a soporific bedside book in English stately homes. For it Lucia received either a pension or property in France.

Saturday, 26th

My dear Sir

My Father begs me to say he is too unwell to accept your kind invitation for today. Nothing would have given us so much pleasure as visiting you. My cold is rather worse for Thursday's outings and so many parties going on next week I am fearful unless I nurse it I shall not be well enough to dance the first quadrille with you on Thursday next. Pray remember us most kindly to Mrs Piper & Miss Mackenzie & the rest of your circle

and believe me
truly yours
L.E. Abell.

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 3, undated.



59 *Eliza Darling and the Dumaresqs*

The early 1820s was the time when family groups were arriving, and the Darlings and the three Dumaresq brothers (Edward, who farmed on the Derwent, Henry, later secretary to Darling, and William, who later took up land on the Hunter) were the spearhead. Behind them, in England, was their formidable and not very lovable mother, Ann Dumaresq.

But Eliza Darling, *née* Dumaresq, holds the centre of the stage. Like her cousin Charlotte Anley, who visited Australia to report for Elizabeth Fry and who wrote *Prisoners of Australia*, a detailed account of the Parramatta Factory, Eliza was a fervent evangelical Christian. Her time as leader of Sydney society is almost as exhausting to us as her mother found it. Her good intentions and conscientiousness were almost morbid, leading her to divide her time between trying to efface the bad impression caused by her husband's rigidity, writing long letters of exhortation and advice to relatives, preparing for, or recovering from, difficult confinements, trying to get her weight down, trying to find suitable French plays to improve



Lady Darling with her son and daughter, 1825. Oil painting by John Linnell, 1792-1882. From the Rex Nan Kivell Collection. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Australia.

her daughter's accent, playing the piano at her own parties, and presenting her mother as a paragon of affection and sweetness. Her mother was often an uncomfortable parent; her brothers were often trying; her husband was a social disaster; and the most charming of her sisters-in-law was not only related to a convict, but a scandal. She had to find time to count missing dusters at Government House and, finally, to avert her eyes and shield

her daughter from bullocks' heads dripping blood and brandished under her cabin windows by crowds stirred almost to riot by W.C. Wentworth. It was quite a colonial career.

Her first impressions, December 1825, are given to her brother Edward, who was in Tasmania.

. . . we have been in this house only a week to-day. Oh what a Government House! We are now living in some rooms that Henry has made in the roof . . . if this deluge of rain, which we have had almost every day since we came, and most incessantly during the last week, continues long, we shall have to leave these Rooms to escape Drowning.

Henry is gone to-day as the Governor's Substitute to the Feast that is given to the Aborigines at Parramatta—William went with him to see the Fun I suppose tho' I can hardly conceive much in such torrents of Rain—you should hear Henry talk of this Place, why your turnips and cabbages are nothing to his wool. He quite 'out Herods Herod'.

. . . The Grand Piano Forte has arrived in perfect tune and order, and is a most beautiful one—It's being so perfectly in tune is a proof the Metal Tubes are of use for the small one tho' also packed in tin is sadly out of tune . . .

During the year, Mrs Dumaresq wrote letters that suggest jealousy of her daughter and must have struck at the image Eliza was trying to maintain:

Just received yours dear children . . . I had much rather not have known Eliza was again pregnant, it makes me anxious and nervous and I cannot help her myself, I am delighted with all your descriptions of your usefulness, your schools, Dispensaries, Balls and Buildings, it fatigues me to think of them . . .

Two months later Ann Dumaresq had fresh grounds for complaint, having heard (wrongly, at that time) that her son-in-law was to receive a knighthood:

The Red Book says you are a Lady. Compliment [paper torn] If it is so I dont care one pin about it, Except you do [paper torn] and husband . . . but titles without fortune are very inconvenient I think and I am sure poor little me lived ten times more like a 'Lady' than you did, when you were here . . . and if it could afford me any satisfaction (which it does not) I have lived to see the downfall of all those that were against me . . .

Mrs Dumaresq was at pains to count the number of times Eliza's name occurred in the newspapers they sent her:

Yours only twice in the Ball accounts and children afterwards and then in so trifling a manner as if you were one of the children, however the general seems immortalised instead of you.

. . . perhaps you are not dignified [tear in paper] and consequential enough I dont think [paper torn] people think so much of little short folk as they do of your great big tall women, well, never mind, we all know that you have within that passeth show . . . I will send this Letter I think in case ships should be sent out on purpose to announce this important event to the nation . . .

When the Sudds affair was relayed to her, she was indignant—for Darling's sake, not Eliza's. The disciplinary measures Darling had taken to prevent soldiers malingering in order to get their discharge had resulted in the death of Sudds—and intense excitement whipped up by the Press. But Ann soon reverted to a topic nearer her own heart:

I am rejoiced to see provisions so very cheap . . . I suppose you have a Farm and Dairy and free of expense, free house, rent, your servants and wine are the only great expense; I should think you cannot spend 1500 a year, cloathes you have in abundance for twenty years.

For sympathy, at the end of 1826, in the Sudds affair, Eliza turned to her brother Edward in Tasmania:

I will not say *one* word to you of my own upon the subject which you will see by the Papers is occasioning a good deal of trouble but if you have time pray read from the very commencement of the affair the Governor [? Government] General order & *all* the newspaper accounts, of the Soldier's Death, & give me your opinion I should like you to do this before you *hear* anything as by that means we shall be enabled to judge what sensible people will think in England, as a certain Party *mean* to make *use* of it, in every possible manner to get rid of the Governor.

Here, everything seems to be judged either by *party* feeling, or *private* feelings, so that we can none of us judge perhaps fairly, what impression it may have upon unprejudiced people—we have a large Dinner Party to-day—a Ball in the Evening at which I expect the 'fairest of the fair'—I am now going to attend a Committee at the School†—and a ship sails for England on Sunday next; for which I have not yet one line written and I *must* write a long account of *our* Factory Rules, to the 'Ladies' Reform Society'—and to Mrs Davis, besides copying from my Journal for the dear little Mother . . .

Henry's marriage was a fresh worry. He had married, in England, Elizabeth Sophia, daughter of the Hon. Augustus Richard Butler Danvers.

Bye the Bye, what is the Mr Danvers at Hobart Town—a Prisoner? for they are so bad I should not be surprised. He is not however the eldest son, for he is the Honble & Heir to the Title of Lanesborough Sophy's Brother & perhaps herself must be illegitimate, as the Father did not marry Miss Sturt till 1802.

The problem of illegitimacy was satisfactorily resolved: all the children were later accorded the status of an earl's children.

At the beginning of 1829, she asked for a return of the detailed family journals which went to and fro between Australia and England, and returned to her new sister-in-law:

Sophy's Mother was the beautiful & *notorious* Bozzy Sturt, who eloped with Butler Danvers during the life of his first wife, whose son is the Honble & heir to the title of

* 'The fairest of the fair' was Jane Blaxland. Edward had admired her when in Sydney.
† The 'School' was one of Eliza's reforms.

Lanesborough—They were I fear almost all *bad*. Old Lady L kept a Gambling House—When his wife died, he married Miss Sturt, some of the Children are therefore illegitimate* & some not—I think the Paper I *saw* talked of the Bushrangers taking Mr Danvers, as having a Ticket of Leave, therefore he must be a prisoner after all, or else I made some mistake—well it cannot be helped—*She* herself seems quite charming—Lady E. Hamilton's character of her is very beautiful & I have also a letter from Mrs Davis, my friend, mentioning that she is worthy of Henry . . .

In 1830 she lectured poor Edward:

It is one of my maxims, which I have so often repeated that I think you must have had the *benefit* of it before now, that it ought to be a cause for gratitude, when our circumstances oblige us to do what we ought to do.—It is a woman's duty, in every station, however wealthy or however exalted to 'look well to the ways of her household—and see that her maidens eat not the bread of idleness' and Solomon who was a wiser *man* than I *am* said so—I myself, not *personally* because I am so often ill, nor do I think it is always requisite, but by a system

Replying to a query from Edward's wife, Fanny, she expressed strong views about young Australian girls as maids:

. . . they make the best nurses, by a *strict adherence* to regularity in the Hours of *feeding* the Children, so that you may *yourself* superintend *that*, they may, in other respects, be trusted to wash, dress, & play with them—Excepting my Housekeeper, who is also my own maid, & who has married our Butler since she has been in our Service, all my other four Female Servants are young Girls—& Sophy has also two Girls for her children, & we *both* like them best—if they are but docile you may make them what you please . . . When I was unwell & confined to my room for months, our Parties went on just the same, excepting that Ladies were *not* asked to Dinner Parties, only Gentlemen, but we had Dances & Evening Parties as usual . . .

Then she devotes several pages to religion and world affairs. It is a relief to turn to her light-hearted sister-in-law Sophy, Mrs Henry Dumaresq, who disliked the colony and escaped from it with her children as soon as she could after Henry's death. The Winn's were friends of her troubled youth. The miscarriage in the Nostel salon is a little unexpected.

Sophy Dumaresq to Mrs Winn:

Sydney February 20th 1830

Your letter to me was so truly delightful that I know not how to express the pleasure it afforded, when I think of the constant, undeviating interest and affection of one of my dearest and best loved friends (& oh! how often *do* I think of it) it makes me shed tears of thankfulness & love towards you . . .

* Sophy was the cause of Mrs Darling's anxiety on account of her family. She proved obviously an unconventional but loving wife.

She explains why she cannot keep a journal:

. . . I begin the day by rising at five o'clock, not from choice, but downright *compulsion*, being dragged *neck & heels* out of bed, if I show the slightest resistance, of course I need not name the perpetrator of so *tyrannical* an act, none but a man & a husband ^{c.} be guilty of such *cruelty*. My next act is to prepare to assist in pushing Cornelia Darling in the little Garden Chair to the bathing House ab.^r a mile distant, Colonel Dumaresq drives, & our party is increased by the addition of my *little Son* (How do you think it sounds? I fancy very oddly indeed) two Newfoundland dogs & a spaniel. The three latter personages accompany me into the sea, where we all seem to enjoy ourselves very much. We return to breakfast at $\frac{1}{2}$ past eight, immediately after which Col Dumaresq leaves me to my own concerns, & attends to the duties of his office (*alias Treadmill*.) for the remainder of the day my time is almost entirely engrossed by my baby, for in this *odious* country (for I must call it so) it is impossible to trust the most trivial thing out of one's sight & since the departure of the servants we brought with us from England, I am never comfortable in leaving home for a minute without him. My maid immediately commenced by following the terrible fashion of this part of the world by producing *olive branches*, & in consequence has set up for herself as *milliner & dress maker*, & I have no doubt will soon realize a fortune. She made a bonnet out of a piece of gauze I gave her w.^h was literally the fag end of one of the famous *East Riding* Turbans w.^h she sold for 30^r. On her departure poor baby & I were left to the mercy of a convict woman who had been with us four months previously & had as far as I c.^d judge behaved perfectly well. I was prejudiced in her favour the more because she was Yorkshire, & spoke the dialect charmingly. When she was more immediately placed under my observation however, I began to suspect she was fonder of the Brandy Bottle than I quite approved of, & this idea was only too well confirmed soon after, by her coming upstairs to me so intoxicated that she scarcely knew what I said to her, & on attempting to undress the baby exposed herself so much that I took him from her & ever since have dressed & undressed him myself. Her conduct was altogether so abominable that Col Dumaresq sent her off to the watch house from whence she was committed to the Penitentiary for six months.

It is one of the most serious objections to the Country & certainly a great evil, I mean the difficulty almost amounting to an impossibility of procuring servants with the requisites generally applied for, namely Honesty, Sobriety, & obliging disposition. If one qualification is met with, there is sure to be an absence of the others.

In my own individual case however I probably care less, at least *feel* the inconvenience less than others who are more addicted to straying when 'two or three are gathered together'. I really never leave my own quiet home to go anywhere in search of society, not one of the Gowns belonging to my wedding paraphenalia have been put *together* since their arrival in this Kangaroo Land; & till the parties at Govern.^r House are resumed I think they are likely to remain a long time in their packing cases—I have rather digressed from the account I was giving you of the *order* of the day, the rest is soon told however; after breakfast I wash & dress baby, *order dinner* (wh by the bye I absolutely detest, all the other cares of housekeeping included), & to play with & amuse him till 4 or 5 O'clock when I trot over to invade Col Dumaresq's office & bring him back with me to an early dinner after which we ride out till 8 or 9, & by ten I am in bed, with my baby boy lying on the outside *at my feet*, where he now sleeps, being very hot weather, [indecipherable] however he has his own little Cot wh. is placed by his *papas* side, who is the *very best nurse* you can imagine.—I will give you an instance of this assertion. Whenever his boy wakes during the night wh. he usually does two or three times for me to nurse him, Col Dumaresq takes him up & *holds him out*, wh the

young man quite understands, & immediately performs what is required of him. Where wd. you find another Papa to do as much? By the bye it is quite extraordinary how *used* I am become to *these sort of things*: I am really now downright impudent, *almost improper*, wh. you know was not the case *once* I was obliged to get you & Louise to talk abt. water closets for me to Col Dumaresq. Do you remember? At present however I cd. save you the trouble, but it is all my husband's fault; Stories he used to tell & make me blush at, I now enjoy extremely & think very good fun. In short I realize the old Proverb 'Evil Communication, &c.' You know the rest—I am thinking if I have written to you since my confinement, & cannot recollect having done so, I must therefore now assure you, that little Fitzroy is a very nice little fellow, (in his nurses—my & papas opinion at least) & is becoming more engaging & intelligent Every day. His eyes & complexion are the most clear & brilliant possible, but unluckily he has got my mouth instead of his papas wh. is a dire mistake, & a nose wh. makes one rather uncomfortable not knowing how it is to *turn out*, at present however, *it turns up*.—I think I have employed more of the paper in writing abt. *self* than I ought to have done, but will not apologize because I am vain enough to imagine that the subject is not uninteresting to you my dearest Mrs Winn. I cannot tell you how very happy intelligence of dear Rowley's amended health made us, I only hope Every succeeding letter will more strongly confirm this, what is there I wd. not give to see you all, & show you my little mannikin, but alas I see no prospect of such happiness being in store for me. This is not the country for making fortunes; it is only calculated for living *in*, not *out* of it & unless Col Dumaresq gets some Govt. appointment wh. wd. *pay tolerably*, wh. I now see no chance of, being (disappointed of the *Treasuryship*,) I fear there is no reason against our passing the remainder of our lives here. Even if this was the Paradise the Prejudiced & Enthusiastic represent, in point of climate, scenery &c, such advantages wd. not compensate to me for the complete separation wh. exists between myself & those dearly loved friends I have left; I had rather be doomed to live in a perpetual yellow London fog & be within *their* reach, than in the *finest situation & climate* at 1600 miles [!] distance. *I am* however greatly disappointed in New South Wales in every instance that I have heard it given credit for. The climate *to me* is *detestable*, the Lower orders of people more depraved than I cd. have conceived possible, & the country is dull & heavy & gloomy in the extreme. Every succeeding day however only proves to me more forcibly that *place* has very little to do with happiness, for I decidedly do not like the climate or admire the Character of the Country in general, Sydney being excepted as beautiful yet I am *very very* happy. If we were not forbidden to praise one's own, I shd. launch out in Col Dumaresqs, nothing can exceed his care, tenderness, cheerfulness & unremitting solicitude towards me in Every way, & consequently nothing can be more content, more grateful or more devoted to the promoter of her happiness than yr. little friend, who so often had a tear in her eye when she used to come to her dear unfailing friends at Nostel for comfort & a fresh supply of health & spirits to *go on with*, If I cd. but feel the conviction I shd. see you & a few others at some future day, I shd. have little else to desire for myself.—I have ventured to send you a long list of things we find a difficulty in procuring here, as you & dear Louy assured me you wd. not consider a paper of commissions very troublesome, If therefore at a convenient time & occasion you wd. procure what we require & send them in a box directed according to the enclosed, written by Col. Dumaresq himself, you wd. greatly oblige us, & *me* especially, as the things are more to supply my wants than his. By the bye I must particularly mention that he wants a few yards of silk to cover his stocks with, he says that Mr Winn will know what sort it shd. be, *I imagined*, it shd. resemble the lining of a certain old coat of his, in fact of the tatters of wh. my first born *sweet*

baby was wrapped in the night of my unexpected accouchement in the Salon at Nostel, however Col Dumaresq says he thinks it shd. be a kind of ribbed silk, whereas what I allude to, (& have now,) is a *twill*—I have a great deal more I might say, but so many letters are on my mind to write, that I can indulge myself no longer in lengthening this. Col Dumaresq I know will add a few lines to this. Say everything most affectionate from me to dear Mr Winn, & kiss all the dear Children of whom I hope to receive shortly the best accounts. Adieu my dearest kind friends & think of me always, as I really am your most sincerely & affectionately attached & obliged Sophy.—

Source: Letters and Journal from Ann Dumaresq and Mrs Darling forwarded to Edward Dumaresq in Tasmania. My copies from originals then in the Allport Library, now in the Tasmanian Archives, copies by courtesy of Mr G. Stillwell; Col. Dumaresq Letters, Sophy Dumaresq to Mrs Winn, ML.



60 *The Noun of Assembly is Macleay*

The Dumaresq descendants are part of Australian history, their story interwoven with that of a still larger family group, this time Scottish, the Macleays (modern spelling; the family used the Scottish form, McLeay). These in turn linked themselves, through an Onslow marriage, with the Macarthurs, the Clunes Inneses, and with T. Harrington. George, the son who accompanied his parents to Australia, established Brownlow Hall and went into politics; William, to whom the letters are addressed, completed the unique garden at Elizabeth Bay House, and collected the materials that later formed the Macleay Museum.

Fanny, the eldest daughter, shared most intelligently the scientific interests of her father and brother. Her death, six weeks after her late marriage, almost broke her parents' hearts. Two of the other sisters add interesting comments on the unpopularity of Sir Richard Bourke.

Macquarie Place Jan^y 31 st 1826

My dearest William

I can merely write you a few lines at present in order to assure that neither the great deep nor anything within the great deep has swallowed us up, but that we are now in a Government house* and as sound as myriads of mosquitoes will allow us to be: Mama, Susan and Margaret rail against this Place constantly. As for me, I have not allowed myself to form an opinion and indeed I would not express it were it unfavourable for they all blame me for their being here . . .

Our house is, or rather, I should say, will be a tolerable one presently—now it is so greatly out of repair that we are uncomfortable having as workmen a parcel of thieves

* The official houses formed the south side of Bridge Street, opposite Macquarie Place.

whom we are obliged to watch as a cat would a mouse—we have been deluged with rain ever since we have been here and much damage has it done to us—Poor Papa had his Books in the Coach until Major Goulburn could take his away in order to make room—Well, about a week ago there was a dreadful flood and the rain poured into the coach house without anyone observing the circumstance the next morning the chests were found standing in a pool several inches high—Still we comforted ourselves that the books were safe for they were in tin. Alas! soon we were made aware of our misfortune. On undoing the chests—the tin on the *most valuable* cases was softened and the damage immense I will not grieve you more about them however—I have been occupied in washing off the sandy stains from them ever since—I *can't tell* you how busy we are and then we have to receive so many visitors that really I have no time to look about me for insects or anything curious—I can read Spanish tolerably or rather I could read it since I have been here I have not looked at a book of my own.

I can assure you, that the accounts we have listened to about this colony have been greatly exaggerated. But of this more next time—I shall write you, dearest one, in a few days again there is a vessel to sail direct for London next week in which Major Goulburn† departs. We like the Governor, *admire his Lady*, and are pleased with his staff. We are to spend this evening with them. George Innes is married the Captain is here and is of the greatest use to us—Sir John Jamison made a kind of offer for Susan the other day—But altho' Mama was anxious for the connexion on account of *riches* Susan is decidedly against encouraging the affair—His character is despized here and the gout renders him not loveable—Pray write to one who doats on you, whose one happiness now will be in recurring Letters from her beloved Brother. Our Father likes this Place very much I am happy to tell you He is very much occupied at present indeed—late and early.—You must not forget me, William—

Believe me
Ever yours most truly
Fanny L. Macleay.

In 1832 Sophy Dumaresq, writing to Fanny, gave her views—at second hand—on Sir Richard Bourke, whose unpopularity was due to his liberal views and plans for the colony.

Everything I learn of the present governor lessens him, in my humble opinion, & Mr Blackburn says he is *much* disliked & that he pities my Father in having to have anything to do with such an autocrat. Mr Jones and the Archdeacon write in the same strain to Col. Dumaresq—

Poor Sir Richard received an equally unfavourable send off from the unmarried Macleay daughter, Kennetheana, to the still distant William.

† Major Goulburn had been too independent and had been recalled. The Captain Fanny mentioned was George Innes's brother, Archibald Clunes Innes, who later married Margaret Macleay. Sir John Jamison owned Regentville. His personal life was disreputable.

Sydney 23rd December 1837

. . . When are we to expect you here? We are formulating all kinds of conjectures sometimes supposing its probable that you may come out with our new Governor—what a relief it is for us the departure of that horrid creature Sir Richard he certainly regretted going when it came to the fact and he must have felt hurt when he found how little he was respected by the *respectable*. My only wish is now his worthy son in law soon follows him but I fear there is not much chance of this.



Elizabeth (Mrs Alexander) Macleay, 1826, after John Hopper. Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

His 'worthy son in law' was Edward Deas Thomson, Anne Bourke's husband.

But the family was at its most characteristic when drawn together in the sudden grief caused by Fanny's death in 1836. Mrs Elizabeth Macleay was a complex character. The malicious Barron Field, formerly Judge-Advocate and a mischief maker, took it upon himself to tell her of Mrs Piper's history 'but she could not stomach it'. Gipps told Lady Franklin, who recorded his comment in her journal of her visit to New South Wales, that Mrs Macleay was the severest employer of convict servants in the colony. But here she is simply a bereaved mother, though her comment on the possible secondary causes of Fanny's death is an odd one for a mother to make. Fanny had for some time, apparently unknown to her family, suffered severe bouts of pain, possibly from an ulcer.

20 August 1836

My dearest William

It is in deep sorrow I write to inform you that it has pleased the Almighty disposer of all to take to his eternal rest my dearest Fanny my beloved and first born girl; to you I know the knowledge thereof will be heart rending, but I am so stupid and stunned that I can say nothing to alleviate our loss in this world. But the Almighty in his mercy has given us the blessed hope, both in her life and on her deathbed that through the intercession of her redeemer he has taken her to receive her reward with him in glory . . . It has been a severe trial to your poor Father whose happiness you know was in his children. He in one of his ejaculations said 'I was proud of her in my heart' and she has been his companion in his pursuits—you will scarcely have heard of her marriage ere you hear of her death. I fear she caught cold or rather increased one that she had and in coming back to Sydney from Brownlow Hill where she went on her marriage she went to her own house that had been newly painted, but these may be secondary causes. I wish to think that the allotted time was come that her almighty Father had granted her as a blessing to us, she was his, and had lived to him in this world and never was trust and resignation more strongly depicted than in her—oh may we be enabled so to live that we hope to be reunited with her in the realms of bliss, where sighing and sorrow can never enter . . .

Source: Macleay Papers, Macarthur Papers, ML MSS. A4300, 4302, 4303. 1826–1836.



61 *Harriet King to her Husband, and Mary Lethbridge to her Mother, Mrs King snr*

The wife of the future admiral spent two periods in Australia. This letter, and that of her sister-in-law, are valuable for their wealth of practical details of daily life, because Harriet, after the difficult journey, had the still harder role of the single parent, mother of growing sons, on the family property

Dunheved near Penrith. Here she struggled with sick and headstrong children, an unreliable agent, difficult servants, loneliness, and distance.

Mrs Lethbridge, *née* King, after several miscarriages and the death of a specially precious baby daughter, helped found another pioneer family in the same district, where all the Kings enjoyed the generous grants given by Bligh.

Harriet's first entry to her husband shows something of the anxieties of making the long, slow journey when pregnant.

Extracts

5 August 1826

. . . Charles having engaged to supply 6 steerage passengers, and having omitted to make a bargain that a surgeon should be on board, I have determined with your Mother's advice & approbation, to try to get an elderly woman to go out with me, who can act as midwife, and therefore half of Mary's servant's cabin is to be kept for her. I have not yet heard of one, but hope we shall, ere we sail, as I shall then feel easier, if the voyage is lengthened. It will be more expensive certainly, but I think you would not object, as I know were I to be ill on board, without either nurse or surgeon, the very idea would frighten me, and my life might be endangered. I *hope* we shall get to the end of the voyage first, but there is no answering



The King Family. Courtesy of the Goldfinch family.

for it. Our cabins are very comfortable; I have the starboard one, with a Water Closet in it, and Nanny and the children will be close to me.

The next letter is from Harriet's sister-in-law, Mary Lethbridge (Anna Josepha's eldest daughter) to her mother and is written from the old cottage, The Vineyard, first home of Anna Maria and Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur. Mary left six sons and two daughters. She had suffered a miscarriage on the voyage out, and the death of her first child soon after arrival.

9th February 1827

. . . this one is to inform you dear Harriet was safely confined of a *bouncing*, but *really a beautiful Boy*, this morning at $\frac{1}{4}$ to 6—taken poorly at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2—Mrs Rowland called me at $\frac{1}{4}$ to 5. I was soon with her—and as I say at $\frac{1}{4}$ to 6 the Baby was put into the receiver you gave me—Mrs R inexperienced as I am in the business appeared to me so calm collected and quick—no bustle. Hannibal & Maria had requested Mr Anderson might be in the House in the event of anything going wrong—at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 I told Hannibal Harriet was ill and he sent off for Mr A. but as all in the confined room wished and hoped it was *all over*, Baby dressed and Harriet in bed ere he came—She is now *very comfortable* & I trust all will go on well. She certainly is a heroine in these concerns—for I made more fuss when I was ill on board! . . . We are all well—Baby has dark eyes, Lethbridge hand King leg—not an imperfection—& dark hair . . .

Of this child, Arthur, born February 1827, his mother wrote to her husband:

22nd October 1827

I have had a very nice nurse for him, from the Factory,* indeed I have been lucky in the 3 women, they go on very steady, they are all Irish. I cannot do without 3 women at present, on account of the washing. We wash everything at home, and what with the Dairy, poultry, Baking, making candles, & so on, we find plenty to do. I have very little meat from the Butchers, as we reserve fresh meat whenever a Bullock is killed. I have upward of 40 young Turkey, 50 young chickens. My Ducks & Geese we had bad luck with. The crows carried off many of the former, and a large Dog killed 18 of the latter, just as they [were] coming out of the shell. However we shall do better next time. I believe I have eleven Goslings coming on strong. Mrs Flanagan is very attentive . . .

Two extracts from Harriet's letter to her husband in 1827 throw light on their daily life at Dunheved:

. . . Essington now requires a tighter hand than mine, yet I do not regret having brought him out, he is a remarkably intelligent, inquiring child . . . but the fault I find with him, is, he is so self sufficient and selfish . . . McGuire instructs him and Robert in writing and sometimes reading, Multiplication Tables & so on, and I always hear them read once a day; I think it would be no bad plan if we could hear of a gentleman who would come out and instruct

* Women from the Parramatta Factory usually had a bad reputation.

our Boys, for we shall not be able to send them home, at least not all . . . Miss Throsby has married Dr Hill, your Old Shipmate. They came here to see me, and the Dr has promised to be our Medical Man when we want one; I have never wanted one, but once when *Arthur* had the influenza, I then sent into Parramatta, writing also what I had done, when Dr Anderson sent me word if I had had 12 Doctors there, I could not have done better however it is not pleasant not to have someone to rely on, and am therefore glad Dr Hill will come, if we want him.

. . . A few weeks ago a bushranger was taken in the mens huts, he came to light his pipe, and I suppose see what was going on . . . *Essington* has a great dread of the Bushrangers, and when we are out walking he is wretched unless we have a man with us . . . (October) The Campbells told Robert L.* they were going to call, but did not. Mr Marsden has been here once and staid scarcely 15 minutes, Mrs Marsden has been here once. I hear nothing of the Dr. and Mrs Harris . . . I have called twice on Mrs Darling, but was not fortunate enough to see her. The last time she invited me to dinner but I was engaged, so that we have not met. Mary speaks very highly of her, also of the Govr. but she describes Mrs Darling as being a sweet woman. I have received a very kind letter from Mrs Sam Enderly and a present of 2 Books 'Death Bed Scenes' . . . James McArthur will be ruined, Hannibal and Maria are quite grieved about him, he goes to a Mr Wilton,† but learns nothing, and is very idle at home takes no interest in anything that is going on, but loiters about and does not speak the truth at all times; it is a great pity, for he is a very fine looking boy. Miss Waring has left them and is now Mrs Atkinson,‡ she behaved very ill, and gave herself many airs . . .

Harriet King to her husband:

May 1828

. . . Mrs Darling gave a most splendid Ball . . . [burnt patches of manuscript] to which Mr M'Arthur made *all* his family go, Hannibal was also there. Copland and Mary declined, the latter being so unwell, and I declined also, and wrote Mrs Darling a private note apologising, but stating your absence as excuse. The dresses of some of the ladies were magnificent. Mr M'Arthur astounded everyone by bringing in three natives from Port Stephens, dressed in red shirts and white trousers, they staid a little while and when their curiosity was gratified, departed. Mr M'Arthur had only returned from Port Stephens the night before . . . Dr Throsby's§ death was very melancholy, he shot himself with a gun early one morning . . .

* Robert L. is one of two cousins both named Robert Lethbridge. This one is probably not Harriet's brother-in-law, who was usually referred to as Copland.

† James Macarthur, of the Vineyard, later went to Gippsland with Strzelecki; the Mr Wilton from whom he learned nothing was one of the early clergy.

‡ The ill-behaved Mrs Atkinson had been a governess. The Blaxlands and Kings were critical of the governesses, whose preference for marriage was surely natural enough. T.V. Blomfield also wrote a diatribe on *all* free servants' ungrateful preference for better pay, living and working conditions (L. 52).

§ Dr Throsby was uncle of the founder of the Moss Vale family.

Source: Dorothy Walsh, *The Admiral's Wife* (Melbourne 1967), pp. 25, 57, 74, 75, 86.



62 *Mrs Macarthur's Darkening Scene*

Elizabeth could at least unburden her heart to her son Edward. Her husband's malady was worsening, and in his madness he had turned against her and, to a lesser degree, Elizabeth junior, so that they were often driven, literally, for shelter, to the home of her son-in-law, Dr Bowman, and her second daughter, Mary, at the doctor's quarters at the Rum Hospital.

Macarthur's illness, which in some ways resembled that of the Earl of Chatham, was typical of a manic depressive—depression, severe pain from gout or neuralgia, sleeplessness, then the manic phase of frantic activity, expressed in rebuilding and again demolishing Elizabeth Farm. There were too many workmen, contradictory orders, and the master seemed tireless and insanely excited.

On 7 December 1826 she told Edward:

. . . you will perceive I am still at Sydney. I have been sojourning here two months, and yet I am not permitted to return. The repairs at home were commenced with too much vigour, too many workmen employed and too much evident activity bestowed on that which could advance but slowly, and step by step, whilst the family continued to occupy part of the house. At length your father saw his error, discharged the greater part of the workmen, thereby the weekly expenditure and repairs are still going on, well although slowly. I am told that if I return, your dear father will not proceed. I have lived so long in the ruin of a cottage that I think it best to stay where I am until I have a bedroom finished. You will observe by my letter to John that your father has had a severe attack of his old tormenting complaint, with all the customary attendance of despondency and low spiritedness . . .

In March 1827 she reported to John jnr in England:

. . . You will be surprised to hear that I have not seen what is doing at Parramatta. Your father commenced too vigorously. I am kept away because there is no bedroom finished which I could occupy with any comfort. The alterations however are proceeding . . .

She added to Edward:

That he suffers excessively and even more than we can judge is certain, but it is the mind preying upon the body, and disturbing its proper functions . . .

Then she changed the painful subject for a pleasant one:

We have just had a visit from Mrs Abell [see L. 58]. She generally comes in about once a week and chats with us. I told her I was writing to you. She desired to be remembered. Her father has been confined by gout to the house for some weeks. Her mother and brothers are well. Mr Bowman has just walked to see Mrs Abell home.

Elizabeth quoted an example of the lively Mrs Abell's comments.

She had attended some parties and found them 'a strange mixture of finery, ostentation and vulgarity'.

In May, she gave her son Edward a sketch of the pleasant side of their lives:

Elizabeth and Mary are now walking. The former is, as you may suppose, low,* but she is endeavouring to exert herself . . . Our kind friend, Miss Lucas is quite well, and in full activity today, it being Saturday. She sleeps at the Cottage, which is really a very neat little abode and never does she fail to notice the plantation of maize at the gate by the little bridge . . . The corn you had the kindness to send us, collected in your last tour, has ripened very successfully. We think it will be a great acquisition, as it perfects itself in so much less time than maize in general does. Most of the seeds have also succeeded. The pease are not yet ripened. When they do you shall be told if they are good. Elizabeth interests herself about the garden, but really we have had such a succession of untoward seasons that she has almost given it up. She had a fine collection of bulbs from the Cape, in addition to those you brought. The Archdeacon had a great variety which he had planted at the Cottage; some of them still remain there, and a great portion have been removed into our garden. Amongst them is the celebrated amaryllis Josephine . . .

May–November: In a sad account of the increasing strain of John's illness, she wrote of Mrs King's plan to return to the colony:

. . . will she be pleased with this altered country? It is so much changed and so rapidly changing that I hardly feel myself at home in it. It is literally by keeping at home that I do feel at ease . . .

Later, she reported a curious little incident: Bourke had interviewed Macarthur to hear his views on colonial life.

. . . on these it is to be hoped that your poor father would be rational and calm, but it was an odd time to seek an interview. I fear he is not in a quieter frame of mind yet . . .

In June she told Edward of his father's visit to Hambledon (Mrs Lucas's cottage), which had been built for Edward and lent to Archdeacon Scott and where John Macarthur spent some of his last months in Parramatta. Here the Commission of Inquiry into his sanity interviewed him and declared him insane. Colonel Lindesay and Major Macpherson were family friends who did not repel him.

Yesterday, Mr B and dear Mary went to Parramatta to see the dear inmates at Mrs Lucas's cottage and to inquire into the state of your poor father. Colonel Lindesay and Major Macpherson went there also. The two latter saw him—you will hear from one of them what their opinion was. Mr Bowman does not at present see him because he is denounced as a conspirator, as one who is [word indecipherable] in poisoning him. I trust, my dearest Edward, my former letters will in some degree have prepared you for this calamity. Let us be thankful to the Almighty that a wholesome restraint was placed upon your beloved father

* The brothers obviously knew the cause of her depression, which may well have been distress at her father's attitude towards her.

before his malady had induced him to acts of greater violence. My feelings at this moment will not allow of my entering into details. Of me he has made the most fearful accusations—your sisters ordered peremptorily to quit the house. Still, be not alarmed—his fine mind may yet right itself. He is in the house attended by John Moore our old faithful servant—in conjunction with two or three others who attend to his personal comfort in every respect and administer to his wishes . . .

In November she described the effect on her of the long strain:

One great and overpowering cause seems to enervate my faculties. I try to resist the influence but there are times when I cannot rouse myself . . .

Source: Macarthur Papers vol. 10: Letters to her absent sons.



63 *Mrs Macquarie Keeps in Touch*

In London, in reduced circumstances, her life centred round the education of her son, Mrs Macquarie (the unforgiving authorities had denied her husband the knighthood he craved for as a public endorsement of his work) felt a warm interest in the colony of which she secretly still felt herself patroness, and these letters are full of her sympathy towards its stormy petrels. Two of her correspondents were E. Smith Hall and W.C. Wentworth.

Hall was proprietor of one of the newspapers often in trouble for criticism of the Governor. He was a born quarreller, and it is hard to believe the Marsden girls' assurances that his poor wife died at peace, since she was survived by two sons and seven daughters all under sixteen, and the husband was on his way to three years' imprisonment for libel. Hall's later career indicates that Mrs Macquarie's advice fell on deaf ears.

With Redfern, the tie was closer. He was brother-in-law to her husband's A.D.C., Major Antill, and to him she felt she owed the safe delivery of her only child. Moreover, as an emancipist who made good, when he was in his prime (before his reason gave way under the power of drink), he was one of the living justifications of Macquarie's policy towards prisoners.

To E. Smith Hall:

Oct. 31 st, 1827

Dear Sir

I take the earliest opportunity to acknowledge the favour of your letter of the 4th December 1826 and to thank you, which I do most sincerely for your kind remembrance of us, & for the Monitor Paper; the postage demanded being above our means [word

illegible] I was obliged to make over my right to them to a friend, and I should perhaps have never seen the paper, but for the kindness of a person lately come over, who made me a present of a good number of your papers; they interested me to the highest degree. To enter into the tide of Politics in your part of the world, is far beyond my power, but in writing to you I cannot but express my admiration of a disposition to take the part of the weaker, against the strong, more particularly as the former never can do you a benefit but I think you allow yourself to go too great lengths when you become personal in your remarks, it never can do good to lower the estimation of the members of a government more particularly the chiefs. I think you do well to expose oppressive measures, for it is my earnest wish that your representations may lead to good to the poor, without doing injury to yourself; but I have my fears for you & I wish you would be more cautious.

It would be a great improvement (at least in my opinion) if you would alter the plate to a view of the Blue Mountains & lighthouse outside the heads, with the sun rising behind them. The design of the present plate is to my ideas, highly offensive.

I hope you and your family enjoy the blessing of health; I was quite surprised at the bad news your letter contained. In my opinion you have the highest consolation it is possible to possess in your circumstances, I mean that you know the value of the possession you have lost, & that you always treated your excellent wife as she deserved at your hands.

Accept some more of my best wishes & thanks and believe me to be

Dear Sir,
Yours sincere friend
E.H. Macquarie

Source: E.S. Hall Papers.

On 20 July 1828, to Wentworth:

My dear William

I have wished so much to write to you for some time past, & indeed I promised Sir Thomas Brisbane to do so, as he desired me to assure you & thro' you the Colonists, that he has done everything required of him;* that he is no scribe but that you & they may always depend on his devoted service. The fact is, that no man could exert himself more, but such is the powerful influence of the Faction in New South Wales, that at the present moment there is nothing for it but patience, & submission; by the Faction I mean those who have so successfully succeeded in withholding from the Colony tryal by Jury & the other rights of British Subjects—Be assured that the friends of the Colony feel deeply mortified at the turn their affairs have taken, & that they have neglected no opportunity publicly & privately, to inform H.M.'s Government of the true state of *things*—Sir Thomas remained in town until all hope was over—As far as my observation extended, Gregory Blaxland seems to have exerted himself to the utmost & Sir James Macintosh has done most faithfully everything in his power, I think the Colonists would do well to bestow some public mark of their appreciation of his conduct.†

* This picture of Sir Thomas Brisbane does not accord well with his dilatoriness as governor on the spot.

† Ex-governor's wives were always eager for expressions of gratitude from the colonists. Macintosh had worked in vain to get the bill passed that would have recognised Macquarie's efforts.

After a visit to Edinburgh, she wrote to W.C. Wentworth:

. . . I hope young Wills [Redfern's brother-in-law] has informed you of the melancholy state to which Mr Redfern is reduced, I find he is quite out of his mind at Edinburgh, I much fear he will ruin his family by making away with his property, he is surrounded by bad and low people, keeps six horses, has engaged to pay £3000 for a house, gives dinners etc, his kind brother has been summoned from Ireland to try what could be done but returned without being able to do any good. Before I knew how very far his intellects were gone, I paid some bills he drew here to the amount of £300; even if I were able to afford (which indeed I cannot) I should not think of lending him more money, I have got his note of hand for this money & I think of sending either the original, or an attested copy of it to Mr Fitzgerald, & letters to you, I hope you will manage to secure this money from the general wreck which I look for as too likely to befall this most unfortunate person who having saved the lives of thousands is now himself reduced to the most deplorable condition. I would have taken charge of the poor Boy* but he will not part with him . . . Poor Mrs Redfern, no doubt her brother informs her of every particular—he knows I am sincerely sorry for her.

Lachlan is at school we both hope to be on the road for Scotland for our Holidays by this day next week, but we shall not be near Edinburgh where Mr Redfern is. I should not like to see him in his present state.

* The 'poor boy' was Redfern's surviving son, who later returned to New South Wales, as did Mrs Redfern and her second husband.

Source: Wentworth Papers (A757), p. 31.



64 *Miss Penelope Lucas to John Macarthur jnr in London*

If her pupil was the first blue-stocking in the restricted social circle, the governess, Miss Lucas, was the pioneer gentlewoman of small independent means to visit the colony, impelled either through a desire to see the new world or to get away from her relations. She and John Macarthur liked and trusted each other at sight, when she came for interview as governess to the delicate Elizabeth, and their liking and trust never varied. She alone, of his womenfolk, was permitted to visit him in his mad fits. More remarkable still, a stranger she had never seen, a woman of quietly determined views who could not be treated as anything but a friend, became a close confidant and support to Mrs Macarthur till Penelope's death. She looked after Elizabeth Farm when Elizabeth had to be in Sydney, nursed, educated and chaperoned the girls, taught them her own knowledge of gardening, and finally moved into the cottage—now

Hambledon Cottage. First build for Edward, it was then let to Archdeacon Scott, to whom Penelope's strong, sensible help in girls' education was a lasting comfort. The formality of the address in this letter to John is explained by their never having met. The only one of the young Macarthur she hadn't known, John was at school when she joined Elizabeth and her father in 1804, and neither he nor she ever returned to their respective places of birth. He, however, as lawyer, had charge of her affairs. An unpleasant letter from Miss Lucas's brother-in-law to the Macarthur insinuated that they had influenced her to leave her property, which yielded a comfortable income, away from her relatives. Actually, she left her estate to further female education in the colony.

Parramatta New South Wales
Nov. 10th 1827

My dear Sir

I have been engaged lately in looking over my Papers and upon examining my accompts with you I find you hold no specific acknowledgements of the amount of monies and supplies remitted to me at various times, I think it therefore necessary if only for form's sake at least to say that I have duly received the proceeds of my Rents collected from August 1816 to July 1825 including amounting altogether to the sum of Two Thousand One Hundred and Thirty Six pounds fourteen shillings and eleven pence (£2136-14-11) The particular accompts of which have been from time to time duly transmitted to me in this Country.

Believe me that I am very thankful for the kindness with which you have always executed my troublesome commissions and that

I shall ever remain
your friend Very Sincerely
Penelope Lucas

Source: Macarthur Papers vol. 2.



65 *Elizabeth Cox and Mrs Mackenzie, to Mrs Piper on a Wedding at Clarendon*

With six sons by his first wife, Rebecca (see L. 28), and three sons and a daughter by his second, formerly Miss Blachford, Cox, the roadbuilder, had connections, through the marriages of his children, to many families: the Brooks, Connells, and through the Brooks with Rileys, Blomfields and Campbells, and swelled by his sister and brother-in-law, the Macdonalds and their children. The Campbell connection brought in the Inneses of Lake Macquarie and the whole Mackay clan. No wonder the Coxes' home,

Clarendon, near Windsor, was socially as well as economically almost a way of life.

Elizabeth (Mrs William Cox, *née* Piper), who had met her uncle's young *de facto* companion in London in 1811, was one of the more charming of the younger matrons. Her reference to her illness is interesting. She was one of the prolific breeders of whom her sister-in-law spoke (L. 52) and it is no wonder she suffered from fatigue, having borne nine children in twelve years. The address is Hobartville, Richmond, one of the Cox properties which has luckily survived. Clarendon, that fascinating, almost feudal community, unfortunately has not.

The young lady who had not arrived may have been a relative returning from school or another of the exasperating tribe of governesses.

Hobartville February 16th 1828

My dear Cousin

You will see by the date of the accompanying letter that I have not deferred writing to you until now, but after their telling me at Clarendon on what day the teams would go to Bathurst, they sent them a day sooner without letting me know, therefore I'm determined now to be in time, as we passed the Teams of Wool yesterday, and I shall send them my letters today—I was extremely sorry to hear from Mary Ann Mackenzie on Thursday last of your serious loss, by the washerwoman's hut burning down. I do not know of anything that would disconcert me more than having my clothes destroyed. When such a loss takes place it is the best that goes but I sincerely trust that is not your case—I find you are to have the Mackenzies soon for neighbours. He quits the Bank on the 30th June, but the Proprietors have requested him to stay until that time and I believe now they regret that they annoyed him so much as to cause him to resign, but I should suppose his stock increases so fast that it will be far better for him to look after them himself than to suffer the losses he so frequently does. My sister seemed rejoiced at the idea of retreating to Bathurst but my opinion is she will make but a poor Settler's Wife, as to Mary Ann, she appears content to go but would rather remain as she is—'tis pity some sweet swain does not take compassion on her—Ann has now been absent a long time, she is at present at Dr C-s I heard from her a few days ago & she told me she had written a long letter to your Eliza, who must excuse all her blunders as she is from home & I dare say does not write very carefully—our young Lady did not arrive with Cap.^m Ascough, but she left England ten days before him with the Cape Packet with Cap.^m & Mrs Dixon so that we may almost hourly expect to hear of her arrival, and still have not got any of our things that we sent home for by the Marquis of Huntly but hope they are in the Cape Packet or it will delay us with our house getting finished, as all the furniture required for the Carpenters is to come from England and the Paints—the Carpenters are very busy—they have been working in the house these six weeks but it will take many months to finish off all as it should be done but I look forward to great comfort when it is completed if it pleases God to spare us to enjoy it.—My health is wonderfully improved, but I am not at all what I used to be, very little fatigue knocks me up & I am obliged to lay down about the house every day, as by night I am completely exhausted, yet I live in hopes of being quite restored when the cold weather sets in, as it is astonishing how much I have improved this last month, I keep to riding before breakfast, which is certainly the pleasantest time—I hope by return of the Teams to have a long letter from you with an account of how you will employ your time on the Farm, & what you are doing, whether

you have a *Dairy* & I had not seen the Boys since I had wrote you but we frequently hear from them—I can tell you of two Weddings which are actually to take place & that soon—Mr John Reddall to Miss Wentworth and Miss Brabyn to Charles Marsden The former I heard of as a fact from Mary Ann Mackenzie on Thursday and the latter Mrs Brabyn told me of herself & Mr Marsden has been at Clifton with his son to arrange all matters with the old Folks there, they seem highly delighted & it will be a great satisfaction to them to see her so comfortably settled before they leave this world of care and they are now getting old. Mr & Mrs Smith the new Clergyman & his Lady are come up to Windsor & parson Cross is gone to Port Macquarie, we called on them yesterday, but we have a queer set of neighbours, Mrs Smith made a great parade in visiting us very frequently when I was ill, & hoped I would see her as soon as I was able, which I did & again after my return from Sydney and they themselves were rude enough to invite all the neighbourhood excepting ourselves to Dinner on the 1st Jan^y since when she hasn't been near us although [the road] passes our house.

The enclosure, from Mrs Mackenzie, lacks its last page. She was one of the many Mackenzies, one of whom was Piper's sister, but the tone suggests a non-relative. Whoever its writer, the letter adds colour to the Clarendon wedding and gives details of Elizabeth Cox.

Sydney
Decr. 2nd

My dear Mrs Piper.

I have at length returned home again after an absence of more than two months, which I have spent very agreeably with my friends at Windsor. I wrote to you from Mulgoa, which letter I hope you received, really my time has been so much engaged in preparation for the wedding at Clarendon that I have not been able to write to any of my friends which I fear will cause them to think me very [? neglectful] but really I have not had a moment to myself, I have written a very long letter to the Capt, for it's more than two months since my last letter and I am sure he must be angry with me. I have given him a description of the Wedding which he will read to you & I must give you a description of the Bride's dress, I mean Miss Blachford. She wore a clear muslin dress beautifully worked at the bottom & Lace let in, over a sarsinet slip, the hem of the skirt was Satin & the body trimmed with pipings of white Satin & Lace, a Lace Pelerine, silk handkerchief & watered ribbon Band, a Leghorn Bonnet trimmed with Satin Ribbon & a handsome white veil. Miss Mackenzie had a plain muslin skirt with broad flounce, white Satin Spencer & Leghorn Bonnet with Satin Ribbon. Mine was a clear muslin dress, worked, with a flounce of the same over white Satin Slip the body trimmed with Satin & Lace, a white french Hat fully trimmed with Ribbon, & we all looked *very dashing*, this was the first Wedding I ever was at, Mrs W. Cox came to Clarendon & brought white Favors for the horses—I could tell you many funny adventures during my stay in the country which we met with, that could make you laugh but must reserve them till you see Miss M—she will give you a description as she was present. Mrs Mackenzie was staying at Hobartville when I was there, with little Hectorina, the child appeared at the end of the week, with the change, but her mother indulges it so much, and allows her to eat anything she likes, unripe fruit and whatever may be on the Dinner-table, that it disagrees with her directly she has eaten. Mrs W. Cox is looking very well and pretty, but I dont think she is strong. Ann has grown quite a young woman, taller than her mama,

she is much stouter than she was & is now a very pretty girl indeed—I have not seen Sally Graham . . .

Source: Piper Correspondence vol. 2. There is some confusion in dates, as the remarriage of William Cox senior occurred earlier.



66 *Mrs Edye Manning Chats to her Mother-in-law*

Mrs Manning is one of the inconspicuous charmers of the Sydney 1830s, one who created a pleasant home and social atmosphere while trying to conceal her problems of poverty, her constant longing for the sons left behind, the ill-health of her daughters, and her husband's increasing exhaustion under the burden of overwork. Courage was her outstanding characteristic, along with her qualities as a homemaker; and beyond this she had a gift for words. Her descriptions are sharp and clear: the plea for kindness to the cat left behind is masterly, and we are almost present at her evening party supper table. But the imaginary visit to her sleeping sons is something more. One could almost believe she possessed extrasensory perception. She is one of those for whom, as with Mary Talbot (L. 4), one could wish the story had a happier ending, instead of the recurring money troubles that dogged her husband. He was in financial difficulties all his life, twice bankrupt, and once at least imprisoned. Later, his relatives in Australia tried to help, but the offer was not accepted. But perhaps the brilliant legal and political career of her son William, who came to New South Wales in 1837, proved some compensation.

Sydney February 18th 1830

My dear Mother

Though Manning has written a long letter to 'all of you' yet I must address a few lines in particular to say how much I am gratified by your kindly feeling towards animals whose race you used to dislike—they strongly mark the degree of affectionate remembrance you hold us in & it is sweet to be thought of in such a manner by friends who are so dear to us & so distant from us. When Pussy is purring over her saucer of milk fancy she is delivering a message of love & thanks from me. How often do I think of you all & picture you in different rooms & under different circumstances—my dear Father in the act of family worship & invoking a blessing on us who are separated from him only in body not in mind —then I see him reading and smoking his pipe in the Library—I see you making breakfast or playing a pool—your dinner & tea hours being about our sleeping time—Lydia I see drawing, & I very frequently accompany her to the Sunday School on Sunday mornings—I hope she has long ago returned to you quite well—tho' by a letter I had last night from Edye I fear she had met with an accident.

Then she reverts to Australian news:

Miss Howe returns with Hannah Jane [the elder daughter] to partake of the gaieties of the metropolis I suppose—I wish they may fall her way but sometimes we have not a party for weeks together & then so many that they are quite tiresome—we have had the honour of Sir Edward Parry's company but do not feel particularly edified by it—I do not insinuate that he is by any means deficient but he is not *so* entertaining as I expected—Lady Parry has produced Twins since she has been here & is in a very bad state of health. The Knight's secretary Mr Darch is a nephew of a Lady I used to meet a great deal at Mr Batterby's.

She then comes still nearer home:

. . . we have lately had two or three apple puddings which have been a great treat—I mean to make some apple Jam & Quince Marmalade—I have made a little Peach & a very little Apricot but people here do not know what to put Jams into as there are no preserving pots in the colony & the colonial jars are too porous—I have bought little english halfpint basons for the purpose. Whenever there is any box coming to us I wish you would send us some parasols as they are very dear here—they must be very strong or the wind will break them to pieces. I believe I mentioned in a former letter I should like some shoes from Mrs Percivall if she has kept my measurement—and I should be very glad of some cheap gauze or zeno for mosquito curtains as you pay 1/6 per yd. here for what I suppose you could get for 6d in England & as we want so much the difference in price is material—I have paid 2 guineas for zeno for each bed & it will scarcely last thro' the summer, yet we cannot do without them. I should be glad of 10 or 12 pieces either white or green or blue . . .

In April she discussed another colonial problem, the children's education, and touched on their health. In Australia the children seemed sickly, the elder from some unnamed illness, the younger either slightly mentally retarded or possibly affected with chorea.

. . . I have lately been a good deal tempted to put Elizabeth & Adelaide into a sort of school but that I could not at last make up my mind to do it—I may as well enclose to you the correspondence beginning with Mrs Copland Lethbridge's letter—upon entertaining the idea I saw the Mrs Dixon alluded to when she came one day to Sydney & was very well thought not *much* pleased with her. I met with many people who had heard her well spoken of, but not one who personally knew her & I myself do not know enough of Mrs Lethbridge to be quite sure she was a complete judge of Mrs Dixon's talents which had need to be great as she professed to teach everything herself without any aid from Masters—in fact I do not know that at Parramatta she could get any. Her brother-in-law is one of the most respected attorneys of this place & upon your Brother's speaking to him, we were rather discouraged by his accounts he evidently does not like her—said she did not play well herself, & in fact seemed astonished she should profess so much. I then recollect that in my interview with Mrs Dixon she mentioned Mrs Hannibal McArthur as her particular friend & said she had gratuitously superintended the studies of her young ladies at a time they had no governess. Now Mrs Hannibal McArthur is a particular friend of Mrs Macquoid's therefore to her I wrote in my dilemma & from her I received the answer I send—the same day came the letter from Mrs Dixon pressing for my decision & as you will see she must have taken a larger house if our girls went to her. I did not like to oblige her to do so and in a manner give her a

claim to their continuing with her. I therefore told her I had decided not to send them at present, but possibly I might do so at a future time if the home system I intended to pursue did not answer my wishes . . . I have since engaged a Music Master who is considered a very good one & who is lately returned to Sydney & his former vocation after having for a while turned country settler, & I have also engaged a Drawing Master lately imported & who Mr Forbes told me had such talents as would never have been brought out to this distance had he been free to remain where he was. The man is assigned to the Director of Public Works who employs him as A Draftsman & gives him leave to employ a few leisure hours in teaching at 2/6 the lesson—the girls have had only 3 lessons as yet & I shall soon see whether it is likely to be worth while to continue him—I am afraid my poor Elizabeth has not a hand steady enough for Drawing—she has latterly had a great deal of motion about her & I fear her former complaint returning on her. I have given orders for nobody, not even our greatest intimates to be admitted before one o'clock & if I find that does not give us time enough for the lessons I shall say still later & give my reason to our friends & acquaintances—I am frequently interrupted by household affairs & Hannah Jane is not always well enough to attend to them tho' for the last fortnight she has been remarkably well . . .

Mrs Manning describes a typical evening party:

. . . the centre table occupies its place filled with prints puzzles or fortune telling scraps while the Tea is handed round—that finished the Table is wheeled into a corner, the Piano opened, & either H.J. or I play a Quadrille to set them dancing—we do not allow much loitering between the Quadrilles except that now & then we have a song—there is generally one card table squeezed up in a corner for four gentlemen & sometimes a second into the other corner—this we can do & yet leave room for a Quadrille of 16 comfortably & occasionally they dance 20—at about 11 o'clock the round table in the corner is cleared of its amusements for the Eye & amusements for the Mouth are brought on—our Lynegrave Sandwich Tray—Sandwiches of whatever we happen to have in two of the dishes—little cakes & sliced oranges in the two others with a Spunge cake of my own making in the centre—no knives or forks or plates—sometimes but not always I make a few custards & scatter about the Table—people eat or do not eat just as they like—we give them very inexpensive wine to drink & better & cleaner water than most people can boast of—for this we are indebted to Mr Laidley the Commissary General who made us a present of a Norfolk Island Dripstone & which by the bye has prevented the pains in the stomach I used to have for I have not had an attack since the Drip Stone has been in use.

Under the same date of 1830 she indulged another flight of concealed homesickness, addressed to her sister-in-law:

I am at this minute by your bedside looking at you asleep I think you have a coloured ribbon round your night cap. I can't see very well for it is now 3 o'clock in the morning & you have no light burning in your room—now I am in your mother's room—she has such a funny night cap on & your Father is snoring so loud! but from what I can see I think they are enjoying good rest, & I hope I am not mistaken—now I am going to visit my boys—I shall have no difficulty in getting access to Edye & William—but I do not know how to get at poor Jem for I don't know my way to his room—I hope it is a comfort that he has healthy & sound repose.

In the same year she warns her eldest son to find a wife before he comes to Australia—she knows no local girl she would like as a daughter-in-law. The comment is a strange echo of the same sentiment of old Rowland Hassall years before. The same letter mentions a gift she was sending home—flowers made from feathers of native birds.

There is another interesting comment on her early years in the colony. She pities English girls who arrived hoping to marry well:

The men here can't afford to marry—for they have no money & the girls have no money & so they remain in a state of single blessedness. Now any woman in the ranks of a servant would be sure to marry almost immediately for the men want women to help them in their public houses or their shops & their services are equal to money.

Source: Manning Papers vols. 1–4 (MS. 246, ML).



67 *Lady Parry to her Mother, Lady Stanley*

Almost everything about Isabella Parry, eldest and prettiest daughter of Lord Stanley of Aldeney (his original rank was Sir John Stanley) suggests an early Victorian tale for pious young girls. Her memorial in Stroud church, erected by the Directors of the Australian Agricultural Company, is a marmoreal summary of the fashionable virtues.

Her husband, like her father, was an Arctic explorer; her pet dog, buried at Port Stephens, was inevitably Fido; yet her background and family strains were robust rather than insipid. She was married before her heiress and holy terror of a mother began her series of letters to her daughter-in-law, Henrietta, wife of the heir, who became a self-willed matriarch in her turn. (Nancy Mitford—*The Ladies of Aldeney*—is fun to read on this pair.) Isabella's husband was the eighth child of Jane Austen's beloved Dr Parry. Sir Edward came to Australia as director of the Australian Agricultural Company. But among so many strong individualists, the Hon. Isabella Parry, Lady Parry, was, in spite of her many good works, oddly colourless. Lady Brisbane was a most private woman for a Governor's wife; Lady Parry, in a smaller sphere, became the prototype of the professional public figure's wife—and of the Victorian mother. Their first son died in her arms a few weeks before the second was born. Her first set of twins arrived in Sydney, and she was too exhausted to suckle them; Mrs Darling obliged till a wet nurse could be found. In 1839, at home in England, knowing her strength inadequate to her next lying in, she farewelled her children, gave birth to dead twin sons, and herself succumbed. Her husband took the four surviving children to see her as she lay with a dead child propped on each arm.

It is almost a relief to read on in the story. In 1847 the widower remarried, and a letter of his, in reply to his wife's announcing her unwelcome pregnancy, survives: 'This your last misfortune is indeed grievous and puts all others in the shade. What can you have been doing to account for so juvenile a proceeding . . . I can only hope it is not the beginning of another flock for what to do with them I am sure I know not . . .' Luckily she knew the answers: 'A hot bath, a tremendous walk and a great dose have succeeded but it is a warning.' Next day she wrote again: 'I was sure you would feel the same horror I did at an increase of family but I am reassured for the future by the efficacy of the means.' How Isabella would have disapproved!

From Tahlee House, official headquarters of the Australian Agricultural Company, Isabella Parry wrote to Lady Stanley, on 17 March 1831:

. . . On Tuesday last we set off in a boat for Booral, one of the Company's farms, about twenty miles distant, where the river navigation ends. The scenery is so beautiful the whole way, and I quite longed to get out of the boat, every moment, to examine the beautiful vines and plants which were growing along the shores, all quite new to me. Our boat, the six-oared gig, had an awning, a very necessary comfort with an Australian sun shining full upon us. At Booral we remained two hours, and I met there an old Alderley acquaintance, Daniel B——, who had been transported for poaching; and when I asked whose pheasants he had been taking, he said, 'Sir John Stanley's'! Even though a convict, I felt quite kindly disposed towards him, and glad to see one whose face reminded me so strongly of old Aldeney! The distance from Booral to Stroud is about eight miles, along a most beautiful bush road, and in many parts you might almost fancy yourself in an English park, the trees being not too close, and interspersed with green slopes. I heard, for the first time, many of the birds of which I have read, — the 'bell bird' and the 'coachman's whip'. The former is always found near fresh water, so his note is a cheerful sound for travellers. We also saw quantities of cockatoos and parrots. The situation of Stroud is very charming, but I had no wish to live there instead of Tahlee, for the sea is everything. We paid a visit to every cottage, and made the most of our day. I enjoyed my expedition very much, though I was not sorry to return home, for this is not a country where one likes to leave home for long. It is impossible to feel sure that all will continue quiet and without alarm, when surrounded by such characters, though we have never yet experienced any danger.

December 19, 1831

. . . We have lately experienced another disadvantage of a newly cultivated country, and have witnessed what I have only heard of before, and read in Cooper's novels.—I mean the burning of the woods, and it is, indeed, a fearful and extraordinary sight. For the last fortnight, the whole country around has been in a blaze, and between this place and the Gloucester, a distance of more than seventy miles, there is scarcely a blade of grass left: it is one continued black plain, and the stems of the trees are all scorched and blackened. We were in hopes we should have escaped, near the house, but, after two or three days, we saw there was but little prospect of our avoiding the general destruction. Just as we were coming home from church, last Sunday, a man came running to say that the fire had reached his house, and was rapidly approaching our garden. Immediately all hands were sent off to save the poor garden, and, I am happy to say, succeeded, though it was only by a few minutes. Edward

then made them set fire to a broad space all round, and this was only just completed when the fire reached the place we had burnt, and, finding no food to supply its flames, turned off in another direction. It was fearful to hear the crackling sound, as it came on through the bushes, and the volumes of smoke nearly blinded us all. While the fires were raging on the hills around, it was a most curious sight at night. The shores of the harbour were brightly illuminated, while the large masses of fire upon the horizon lighted up the sky all round. We shall have plenty of occupation, for some time to come, in cutting down the trunks of the burnt trees, and the beauty of our domain is quite spoilt for the present.

Source: Rev. E. Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry* (London, 1868); Ann Parry, *Edward Parry of the Arctic* (London, 1963).



68 Mrs Fay Dies of a Broken Heart: Mrs Arlett to her Son-in-law, Charles Fay

Charles Fay, transported with others for life for machine wrecking, reached Sydney in June 1831 and was assigned to W.C. Wentworth at Toongabbie. This group received an absolute pardon in 1837, but Charles decided to remain, wishing to marry Jane Burrows, serving seven years for 'pawning'—slang for stealing. Mrs Arlett's letter to Fay was attached to his request for permission to marry, as proof that he was free to do so. It was written while he was still at sea and he had carried it with him for more than six years.

Andover, 27 March 1831

My dear Son in Law,

I received your wellcome letter after so Long a Silence all of us was happy to hear from you for wee all thought you was dead for all as [was] sent away have sent home but you. So faithfully as you promised your wife as you would send to her To think as she was soon out of your mind you may depend upon it Charles you was never out of her thoughts night nor day. She travelled miles if anyone had a letter to know if anyone had seen you. But she Could get no tidings of you till George Miland Sent a Letter to his [family] and said you was living at the Light house Point. So we sent a letter their the 29 of april and she was in a great deal of trouble all that night i am sorry to inform you She is no more in this Life. She departed the Second of May and the Doctor Said she broke her heart. The Minister was with her when she died . . .

She said if She could but have one [letter] it would ease her mind. She said to the last she thought you were dead or you would not slight her. She never sit down to a meal But she was talking about you in the night. She would sit up in her bed and cry and pray to God to take her out of her trouble and he answered her prayers all in his good time, but remember Charles you have got a child and a pretty little boy he is. He have got the dimples in his Cheeks same as you. he is now 2 year and 9 months old. he goes to School he can tell all his

Letters, and he says his prayers Every night and morning he can say 2 Collects the Second and the 5 Sunday after the Epipiney [Epiphany] When he says pray dady he says my dady if gone abroad to fight the blacks. My Mummy is in the pit hole. He is such pretty Company . . .

I hope Charles you will make yourself as happy as you Can and put your trust in god for he sees all your ways in that Country as well as at home. You wished us to get your sentence mitigated you may depend on it she and i and all of us done everything as laid in our power for you and i Showed your Short Letter to a Gentleman and he says it is your good Behaviour as will get your Liberty sooner than any one thing so if you Behave well and keep a good Character and i hope you will find a good Master as well use you well for the eye of god is on all our ways.

Mary Arlett.

Source: CSIL, 4/2444, quoted in Eric Russell, *Lane Cove, A North Shore History 1788–1970* (Lane Cove, 1970), p. 62.



69 *Sarah Wentworth Tells of her Father's Death*

In this letter the wife of the difficult W.C. Wentworth seems to have overcome many problems and to be happily settled. As a girl working for a small shopkeeper, she had undergone the ordeal of a breach of promise suit, then, on marriage, was plunged into the extreme complexities of the family life of both D'Arcy and William Wentworth, among which were the acknowledged sisters-in-law mentioned in the letter. Archdeacon Gunther's transcript of D'Arcy Wentworth's tombstone inscription shows that the doctor acknowledged and brought up seven children besides the three by his *de facto* wife. William's first child was born before his marriage, and the following year another baby was born to him by Mrs Jemima Eagar.

Sarah's father, an emancipist, had worked as a blacksmith and, as the letter suggests, had his home in the country.

[Undated]

My dear Aunt,

My last informed you to expect the next would bring the news of my dear Father's death. My dear Aunt let it be a consolation to you to know he's gone in hopes of a Glorious resurrection in Everlasting life. I will give you a detail of his sufferings on the other side. Captain Addison the bearer of this can best inform you how we all are—my kind Husband has sent by Capt. Addison £25.0.0 I wish it to be divided with not forgetting my Aunt Mar [garet?] as I wish her called. I do not expect John is alive as Mr Todhunter heard he was very ill. I have three children, Thomasine, William Charles and Fanny Catherine. Sister Elizabeth

has two girls and expects another every day—I have had three miscarriages. I am not well now as you must perceive by my writing. I hope you got the £10 order my poor Father sent. Mr Wentworth wrote it on Charles Cookney Esq. Castle Street, Holborn in case you have not got it you can apply. I also hope you have seen Mrs Clindon of the City of Eddinborogh if she is not gone give my love to her. I have sent a Newspaper with my poor Father's death in and some of his funeral cakes. I have a good likeness of him.

My dear Aunt—Capt. Addison has promised to bring my poor Father's grandson if he is willing which I hope he will. I promised my poor Father to take care of him as he will be able to take charge of our farms and stocks. We have great thoughts of going to England with our children to take to school and then I should be able to take [care] of you but in case I should not I wish you to let me know if you would like to come as my Husband has two sisters at school in England and it would be a good opportunity as we will send for them if we remain here My dear Aunt you cannot think how happy we all should be to have you hear if this should be sent to you I hope you will inquire to the ship Waterloo Capt Addison. I will write by the next ship. God bless you all.

Your affectionate niece
Sarah Wentworth

On the same side of the sheet:

my poor Father was in great pain on the 10th June and had been so for a month a Physician was sent for and he advised him to have his right leg amputated as mortification had begun and death was certain. Three doctors was called and they said it would give him a chance and the operation would not be so much as his sufferings wear in one day—he wished it to be done Monday 13th June at ½ past 3 o'clock. I came to town every day and sat by his bedside on the 14th I said Father are you sorry you had your leg taken off he said No I am very glad as I am in no pain and I leave myself entirely to God, his Will be done. We all had hopes of his recovery as he appeared to be doing well and felt quite easy although I am sure he knew he would not get better. On Friday 17th the doctors examined his Stump and pronounced a Continuation of mortification and death in a few hours. He asked for us all, my Mother had to be sent for—he could not speak at 2 o'clock but was quite sensible till the last moment, he took us all by the hand and a Minute before he departed he took his Night cap off and waved it three times and threw it away as much as to say I am going—farewell.

He is interred in the Burying ground at present but Mr Wentworth means to have him at Vaucluse the name of our seat as soon as get this ground consecrated we will have built a family Vault. I hope and think he is happy as he has long expected and had time to prepare—the reason he was in Sydney was that he should be near the doctors. He called this his home although Sister Maria nursed him like a child. He often talked of you all and always cryed.

My sisters all love you and wish you were hear.

S.W.

Source: ML Doc. 822 (Sarah Wentworth).



70 Elizabeth Fry to Marsden on the Female Convicts

Marsden had his detractors, but also his fervent admirers, among whom was the Dumaresqs' cousin, Charlotte Anley, who visited Australia and wrote a book on *The Prisoners of Australia* (see L. 59), in which the chapter on the Female Factory clearly shows Marsden's influence. She reported to the sober Quaker reformer Elizabeth Fry. Justifiable concern over the continuing abuses in the Female Factory at Parramatta kept the controversy alive, and Marsden's supporters exonerated him entirely from blame over his action, or lack of action. All the surviving women's letters are from those who believed in him; but the evidence seems to point to there being some truth in the accusation of his detractors that he rarely visited the Factory.

Dagenham Ma 23^d 1832

Dear Friend

Sam¹. Marsden

It is with pleasure that I receive Thy communications and I can assure Thee am glad to attend to Thy suggestions respecting the female convicts. According to Thy wish I have applied to Government respecting the married women and it is concluded that the best plan to adopt is not to have any account taken of whether the women are married or not for as it is only their own word that is taken for it it may as well be taken in New South Wales as here & those who make it clear that they are married certainly should be treated as such but it appears almost impossible *certainly* to know their real condition. Our under sec^{ry} of state also says that it is a law of the country that any woman who has not heard of her husband for seven years may marry again therefore there is nothing to hinder any under such circumstances.

I happen not to have Thy letter now by me as I am not at our usual home but I do not remember any other part that requires an answer.

I hope soon to see General Darling & his wife. it appears to us that they have been very useful in New South Wales & we could not but regret their leaving their important post there at the same time I have a high opinion of General Bourke & his wife though her health is I fear too delicate to allow her to do much but I trust she is willing to do all that may be in her power for the good of others.

I hope that the useful committee of gentlemen & ladies remain superintending the female convicts it would be highly satisfactory to us to hear more frequently from them particularly the latter as we are so deeply interested in the welfare of these poor outcasts & expect from your side of the world further hints as to what we may do for their improvement because we wish to be instructed by you who can better judge than ourselves of the results of our labours—We much regret that so few prisons are yet visited by ladies in England because we feel sure that much good would result from it.

We should be very glad after the arrival of every vessel with female convicts to have the questions on the other side answered. I hope that Thou will like & value our friend James Backhouse & his companion. They may be considered as missionaries from the Society of friends not to proslytise to their own peculiar views but for the single purpose of doing good to their fellow creatures spiritually & temporally we consider them valuable men & I trust that the blessing of the Almighty will attend them & their labours of Christian love.

Pray present my kind & sincere good wishes to the Committee of ladies & tell them that we hope that they will persevere in this work of usefulness through encouragement & discouragement. I want the ladies in Van Diemen's Land to follow their example.

Although yet personally unknown to Thee allow me to subscribe myself

With much esteem & regard

Thy friend

Elizth. Fry

My direction remains the same

Mildreds Court

Poultry

London

Source: Marsden Correspondence vol. 1.



71 *Judge not . . . ' Mrs Colina McLeod to her Husband's Boss*

An ungentlemanly comment on Colina McLeod (the MS has not survived) was made to her husband Archibald a bare month after the burial of her infant daughter in 1835. The speaker had been the unpopular commandant, Major Anderson; the recipient of it his superintendent of agriculture; the place Norfolk Island after its resettlement as a place of the severest punishment.

Dalkin says that Mrs McLeod showed a healthy spirit of independence in using such strong language to her husband's superior officer; but from a member of the strong-minded Campbell family such marked independence was to be expected.

Sir!

I cannot but express my surprise to hear from Mr McLeod the impertinent way in which you spoke of me yesterday. It is as low as it is incorrect, and to say the least of it not Gentlemanly. I would treat it with the contempt it merits were I not desirous of pointing out to you as a professor of Christianity the 7th Chapter of Matthew* for your edification.

I am, Sir
Colina McLeod
Thursday.

* 'Judge not that thou be not judged.'

Source: R. Nixon Dalkin, *The Colonial Era Cemetery of Norfolk Island* (Sydney, 1974), p. 45.



**72 Elizabeth Macarthur tells Edward
the End of the Story**

In May 1834, her mind at rest—John Macarthur had died in April—Elizabeth wrote to her son Edward.

Extract

Parramatta

Saturday 17th May 1834

My beloved son

What can I add to the sad details which the letters from your beloved Brothers will communicate—I am assured, very little—more than what will arise in your filial bosom when the first impression of this awful but natural event which has deprived you of a much loved & revered father has given place to resigned & tranquil reflections.

I know you will weep—dearest Edward & indeed the fountain of my Eyes—which I believed to be nearly dry has been opened anew—I seemed only to have mingled my tears with yours conjointly with dear Brothers & Sisters, and yet why should I have desired this—we ought not to expect our vain wishes to be accomplished—it is now just five weeks since the mortal remains of your dear father was consigned to its last earthly tenement—the immortal spirit is, I humbly hope & trust, in a state of blessedness. Under this impression, my dearest Edward, I am resigned, and can look around me for the sources of consolation—now that the Shock arising or rather increased by the suddenness of the event has in some measure subsided—I had freely indulged myself with the hope, that it would have pleased God to restore the dear departed to a more sane state of mind—& that he might have been at peace with his family—that he was restored to reason for a few minutes I have no doubt—more was not granted. Let us say thy will be done on Earth (by God) as it was in Heaven.

Source: Macarthur Papers vol. 10.



73 Mrs Sarah Suttor to her Husband George

Sarah Suttor was one of the pioneers who had lived through the bad times. Her husband had been called to England by Bligh as a witness at Johnston's court martial, and she had had to struggle on alone. But when she writes she is secure: her elder children had made good marriages, their property at Bathurst was prosperous, and her husband had a sinecure (with perquisites) in the boats plying from Sydney to Parramatta. Mrs O'Connell (Bligh's daughter) showed her small kindly acts, and the cosy Lady Mary FitzRoy had not only paid her a visit but inspired her with her own bazaar craze that followed as a ship's wake the comfortable lady's

progresses round New South Wales. In fact, a few lines from Lady Mary's note sets the scene: 'I see this canvas will make two bags, it would be too large *for one*. I am sure you will not have enough Wool for them, so I send the remainder of the [word illegible] instead of waiting to know as I said I should do in my letter & it does not matter having 2 or 3 of the same.' (Postmarked 17 December 1846.)

Sarah wrote from Sydney on 9 March 1835:

My dear Husband

Mr Keys from Bathurst called on me this morning with a letter from our dear Elizabeth it was directed to Sarah but I could not *withstand* the temptation of opening it; it is a very affectionate letter inclosed is a one pound Note to bye some shoes—my dear Girl says she is much in want of them but as it is too late to send by to Days Maile shall defer it till thursday they are all well as is all friends at Bathurst.

Mr Francis has just been; he says the steam boat [the service was established in 1835] goes up to Parramatta with the Directors he himself will not be able to go on that day free of Expence and as you are a Director I thought you might like to come back in her—Give my love to my dear Sarah she will be much pleased with her sister's affectionate letter—I hope my dear Husband you are better then when you left Give my love to all my dear children I wish to know Evom [? Everyone] is—I must hurry down George Street to put this letter in the Post.

Your Affectionate Wife

S.M. Suttor.

Source: Suttor Papers. On Lady Mary FitzRoy see Annabella Boswell, *Journal* (Sydney, 1965), p. 152.



74 *Blaxlands, Ritchies and Dowlings, a Lively Lot, with an Echo from Lady Brisbane*

The word 'lively' may seem *lèse-majesté*, but surprising diversity and some curious quirks mark the surviving letters. They touch on the marriage of a daughter of Harriet Ritchie (*née* Blaxland) and a Ritchie son's letter to his stepbrother, a Dowling (Harriet became the second wife of Sir James Dowling, Chief Justice). There is a letter from Jane Blaxland with references to her dead sister's daughter, known as 'Baby', whose letter (Elise Breton to her aunt Louisa Australia Blaxland) forms the epilogue to this book. And there is a note from Lady Brisbane to Jane Blaxland in England shortly before the latter's death, since the Brisbanes and Blaxlands had long been friendly in a rather formal, well-bred way.

The scene of the early letters is Newington, an extraordinary re-creation of English life at an earlier period, an artificial 'Merrie England' that was



Lady Dowling (Harriet Mary Blaxland), 1835. Courtesy of the Mitchell Library,
State Library of New South Wales.

very strange in Australian conditions, but descriptions of which—as this from Alec Ritchie, writing to his mother's stepson, James Sheen, then on his way to England for legal training (he in turn became a judge)—make fascinating reading: 'Newington presents extraordinary contrasts . . . at one time . . . full to overflowing . . . at another *desolate* & presenting the appearance of a deserted castle . . .'

Harriet (whom her mother, of French extraction, called Harriette; she herself later used the more usual 'Harriet'), writing to James about the same time, gives a picture of herself and family, including her husband as Chief Justice. Both he and his predecessor, Sir Francis Forbes, died of overwork.

Extracts

Sydney 15th June 1836

My dear James

I wish I could take a peep at you and see how far you are on your Voyage—and see how old Neptune's realms agree with you. I hope no pain in the side remains—and that by the time you reach England you may be strong and stout enough to enter the lists with any youth of your age whether it be an effort of mental exertion, or bodily strength—for Boys must fight their way literally, as a stranger among many. With regard to your comforts I have not the slightest anxiety. I know Mrs Forbes' kindness of heart too well and that long before you will of necessity be separated from her you will not only admire and respect her as I do, but have benefited in a manner from her society more than you may ever be again from that of any lady—I shall deeply regret dear Arthur's loss in not going home with her—You will be sorry to hear that in the inheritance of Mr Forbes' honors, your dear Father has been as great an Invalid—how it has happened I cannot tell—he was ill when you left, and though his attacks are not of a serious nature, yet it has been one series of relapses ever since—and I despair of his being well again till he can go into the country for change of air and scene—he is looking delicate and very thin—I reckon upon this reaching you my dear Boy after the perils of the Voyage are past—but keep a grateful remembrance of it with your God!—and put your trust in Him for the future guidance of your life—and you cannot fail to be all a devoted Father would wish to see in a Son—Indeed James I attribute much of his illness in the first instance to the pain of parting with you—We shall expect to hear a very long, and full account by the first letter, and hope to hear that Mr and Mrs Forbes have grown quite stout—you and your party are often, nay continually, the subject of our conversation. And when you next see dear Mrs Forbes give her our united and affectionate remembrance and say we sincerely hope she found her darling Boys in every respect what her fond hopes could wish—although you have been gone so short a time we have but narrowly escaped losing my beloved mother, and poor Mary, the former by a severe fall,—and the latter from a long and dangerous illness, the rest of the Newington family including my own dear Tribe are quite well—and when I last saw them begged me to send their love—the first time I recall the amusement of the day with us is, the grand stir the Ladies are making the introduction of Sir John's daughter*—which has been carried so far that notwithstanding she has been invited to the first private party of the Governors for the season—on Thursday next, she is not to go—as the Ladies would not meet her—of the particulars I know

* Sir John was Sir John Jamison. Governor Bourke was severely censured by influential matrons for giving away one of Sir John's natural daughters—perhaps this one.

nothing, Mrs Manning and Plunkett having been chief in the business—tell this to Mrs F. it will amuse her—Vincent, & Arthur made their debut at the Birthday Ball—a very splendid assemblage for Botany Bay consisting of 500 people at the very least—your Papa and I did not go.

I much depend upon you making acceptable my best wishes and regards with those of your Father's to your uncle and Aunt and ever be assured my dear James of the deep interest felt for you by

your affection Mother

H.N. Dowling

[Marked: Received 2nd December.]

In May 1837, Jane Blaxland gave her sister Anna Walker, in Tasmania, an account of her niece's marriage to a Mr Boydell.

[. . . I redeem] my promise of giving an account of the *wedding*, which did not take place till the end of the month—it certainly was the gayest I ever attended, and we kept it up for two days in good old style according to Mrs Dowling's wish. We *behaved* most *admirably* from the beginning to the end of the *two days!* and Harriotte bore the fatigue and anxiety of the whole affair with astonishing spirit and fortitude—the Breakfast she provided was handsome —& well served—the Dinner good, and the Evening Party very pleasant, now this, added to marrying a Daughter, was really much business for one day. The Number at Breakfast was 26, the only persons besides members of the Family were the Bishop, Mr Cartwright (his clergyman) and Mr & Mrs Townsend, Mr Boydell's most particular Friends, & the only persons *he* invited—nearly the same party assembled at Dinner—in the Evening we had many additions in the way of merry dancing Girls and Boys—Mrs Broughton and her laughing Daughters were amongst them—I wish exceedingly you and all your little party had also been amongst the number . . . Baby was quite astonished and paid great attention to the whole ceremony she was perfectly quiet with surprise and now tells everyone she is married to the little ugly old man in the black and white petticoat meaning the Bishop & asks why he kept nodding his head over the Book . . .

In 1840 the overworked judge's health finally broke down, but the application for leave was callously set aside by the authorities, and when it came, was too late. He died on the day of his embarkation for England. But before then he was to regale James with details of the feud against him by John Blaxland, who accused Dowling of treachery, and forbade his unmarried daughters to visit their sister. 'The whole conduct of the family towards me, as well as your mother, has been most heartless, unnatural and inexcusable.' Jane had left for England without being allowed to say good-bye to Harriet. The judge warned his son how to behave to Jane. James was to be courteous, but aloof towards his sister-in-law. 'Be it remembered that I tendered my hand and fortune to this lady. I am not conscious of ever having given her offence. She has doubtless yielded to the tyranny of her old Father as a slave, who has no will of her own and has ungenerously ministered to his vulgar prejudice.'

Jane was in poor health. She became engaged in England, but died before the marriage could take place. Lady Brisbane's placid kindness

provided the usual gentle banalities, but she was only a dim voice from a happier past.

Extracts

Makerston Kelso

15th February 1843

My dear Mys Blaxland

. . . Pray my dear Mys Blaxland write me soon and tell me particularly how you are, I trust *well*—this has been an unnaturally mild winter, & I never saw the verdure so beautiful as at this season—violets & many other sweet flowers have appeared since Christmas . . . my sister Elizabeth is in Edin^h at present, or would unite with Sir Thomas & me in kind regards & every good wish, & believe me, my dear

Mys Blaxland
Very sincerely yours
A.M. Makdougall Brisbane

March 11

. . . I rejoice you are returning with amiable friends, to whom you are much attached. We beg to be kindly remembered to Mr and Mrs Cowper, & when you arrive in your native land, will you give our kind regards to Mr & Mrs Blaxland & the rest of your family, & trust you will find them all in the enjoyment of that greatest of Earthly blessings—good health.

. . . my daughters are reading some of the works of ‘Charlotte Elizabeth’ which they are delighted with they are so interesting & edifying, particularly, ‘Personal recollections’ ‘Chapters on flowers’ ‘Glimpses of the past’—all her characters are real, only that the names are withheld. I am happy to hear from you that Emmeline Macarthur is going to be married, & I trust it will prove a happy one . . .

Source: J.S. Dowling Correspondence (Ab 50/1 for Jane Blaxland; Ab/50 for Lady Brisbane, ML).



75 *Ann Gore to Friends in England*

The tide of gently born migrants was flowing to the inland, many leaving little mark except as busy useful people of courage and endurance, leading hard but essentially private lives. The little we know of Ann Gore is contained in this letter, and is chiefly interesting for the picture it gives of the large, lonely expanse of the plains in the Lake Bathurst area. This family is not to be confused with that of William Gore. Ann lived near Bathurst.

Gilmore Sept 29. 1837

My dear Mary Ann

Thank you for your kind letter dated June 7th 1836. I have been some time anxiously expecting one from you and am now looking forward to receive another by every English ship. I am glad you have seen dear Graham we are in hopes he will come out to us now he has gained his promotion—he would be a great comfort to Papa particularly as Edward is obliged to leave us with some part of the stock and it is rather too much for Papa—the management of the Farm with the many annoyances attending it. My dear Mother has been confined to her bed all the Winter as the unfinished state of our house was unfit for her and the weather has been very cold, her general health is good and her spirit notwithstanding all her sufferings keeps up wonderfully. I hope as the Summer is now fast approaching she will be enabled to get out amongst us again. We find it rather dull now Edward has left us as he was our constant companion and used to ride out with us. We are now obliged to go a short distance from home and ride whilst the others walk. I suppose poor Old Mr Cooper is failing fast. I hope Miss Cooper is better than when you wrote last, give our kind remembrances to them also to Mr and Mrs Green. How very much I should like to see you all again—Henrietta Ellen and George—I suppose I should scarcely know—a few years makes such a difference in young people. I must now tell you how we got on with the Farm; we have about 26 acres of wheat in, and our garden produces plenty of vegetables, fruit we have not any yet, but, I hope in the course of a few years we shall have some. My Sisters are both quite well and desire to be kindly remembered to you. Edward has been staying with us for a week, he has had a good many difficulties to contend with in his new establishment, his health is very good. I wrote to Mrs Portlock about two months since, when you see her give our kind love. I hope your Aunt is no longer an invalid, give our kindest regards to them all. And now my dearest Mary Ann as I intend answering your sisters letters I will come back with our kind regards to your Papa and Mamma and believe me to remain

Your affectionate Ann Gore

Your letters my dear Henrietta gave me great pleasure as it shows me that, altho so far distant, you have not forgotten me, the least scrap from England is most acceptable and I hope now you will constantly write to me. I do not know that I have seen a great deal, in our voyage out we stopped at the Cape three days and was kindly entertained by Mr and Mrs Jones, after landing at New South Wales we only remained one day at Sydney and I have only been there one day since. I understand there are a great many houses built, it was when I saw it, an improving town. Parramatta where we resided for a twelvemonth is prettily situated but exceeding warm and mosquitoes in abundance—not very pleasant you will say, the part of the Country we are now living in is so different, the climate more resembles that of England, the Winters are very cold and we keep in large fires to keep us warm, wood being very plentiful we can easily do it, the scenery is monotonous and a great many of the trees having white stems gives them the appearance of being white washed, the Native Blacks are I think the ugliest race I ever beheld and there are no means of civilising them—preferring their roaming kind of life to a settled habitation: their chief covering is a Blanket, which Government allow them or else a kind of Mantle made of the Opossum skin which they wear over the shoulders, they have a chief or king to each tribe, we took one of the little Black Girl thinking to bring her up but, she only remained two days rejoining her

tribe on the second day. I was very sorry to hear such a bad account of our Edmonton Friends, poor old Mr Cooper at his age we must expect to hear of the decline of health. We are now comfortably settled in the Bush, our house is not yet finished—and I think it is probable it will be some time before it is, as to being as comfortable as in old England we cannot expect it, the annoyances you have with bad servants prevents that, and there is no possibility of getting others. Yes my dear you will receive many letters from Ann Gore, for I do not think it at all probable I shall ever change my name, the Ladies here marry very young I have heard of several being only sixteen—Give my kind love to George and believe me to remain

Your affectionate Cousin
Ann

My dear Ellen

I must write you a few lines in answer to your kind letter although I fear I have not anything very interesting to tell you. Our House is pleasantly situated with an extensive view in Front overlooking our wheat field. I dare say you would fancy the scenery must be very pretty from the trees being all ever-green, but I can assure you it is not to be compared to old England, the white gum which is the principal tree growing in this part of the Country is very ugly, the Mimosas are very pretty as also many of the Flowers but they have very few of them any perfume, there are a great many parrots of every variety and Black and White Cockatoos not any of the birds sing with the exception of the Magpie which has a kind of whistle. Society we have none as there are not a great many families residing so far in the interior and that few there are reside twenty miles off. When we first came up we found great amusement in Music but unfortunately the piano is now out of tune so much that we are unable to play and there is no possibility of getting it repaired.

Since we have been here we have been left for two months together without servants and obliged to do all the work ourselves not very pleasant I can assure you. Papa is looking very well, what do you think of his taking a walk of twenty miles and without much fatigue. [p. 2 crossed.] I shall expect to hear from you and very soon, hearing from our friends is one of our greatest pleasures. Believe me to remain my dear Ellen

Yours very affectionately
Ann Gore

Please to direct your letters to Gilmour, Lake Bathurst, Argyle, and if a parcel or box to Messrs Campbell & Co, Campbell's Wharf, Sydney. It will be sure to reach us.

Source: Gore Family Papers (MS. 1677, NLA).



76 Eliza Darling has Definite Ideas about the Colony and its Affairs

On their return to England the Darlings received the due rewards of their governorship. This letter is to William S. Macleay, who, after a distinguished career abroad, settled at Elizabeth Bay House, improved the gardens and made the collection later bequeathed to the Macleay Museum at the university.

The letter seems to recognise a different Australia from the one Eliza knew, and emphasises the rapid rate of change and development. In Manning Clark's words (*History of Australia* Vol. 2) 'It was a period of struggle and change, from a plantation society using convict labour . . . to a society with increasing numbers of free settlers, business men turned land-owners and a small business and professional class in the towns'.

Extracts

Cheltenham October 25th. 1837

My dear Mr Macleay

I had written a letter to your brother James, but it has occurred to me, that if he should be already married he might be absent from Town, I will therefore charge you, to assure him that the intelligence of his approaching marriage gave us great pleasure, and to convey to him and his Bride, our warmest congratulations and most sincere wishes for their happiness.—

We have not any intelligence, so late as he mentions having received, of our dear friends in Australia & begin to be very anxious for letters from thence.—

I have availed myself of your kind permission and have sent a Box to the care of Messrs Norman & Sewell—Will you have the kindness to inform them that its contents are—Silk for dresses—to be called I suppose, wearing apparel, Magazines and Books—& Children's Toys. I should like it to be forwarded by the very first opportunity as it has been already delayed long beyond the promised period of its departure—I was glad to see by the Papers that a vessel had recently sailed with a very respectable class of Emigrants, for generally speaking, I should say—the recent appointments of Governor & Chief Justice, together with Mr Mudie's & other publications,* has sunk the Colony—which was beginning to shake off the opprobrium attaching to it—very much in public estimation.—Colonel Despard, who when he first arrived in England spoke confidently of returning to New South Wales, appears now to have abandoned all thoughts of it—I wish much some clever Person would publish in some attractive Form (in these days, *novels* or Romance seem the mode in which Theology—Philosophy & Political Economy is *taught*) to prove how advantageous it would be to their *own family* interests—and the country in general—by opening another Channel to provide for *younger sons* instead of sending them into already overburdened professions—if our aristocracy would educate one or two as Emigrants & send them to form an aristocracy

* 'Mr Mudie's & other publications' contained savage attacks on Burke and defence of Darling, who continued his military career.

there & provide fit Persons to fill the situations again—at the time, when a 'Chamber of Deputies' or Legislative Assembly *must* be formed—Do you not think that the *fact*, that a young Gentleman [cf. L. 45] who went out about ten years ago—(the individual is a friend of our own) with a small Capital—*now* possesses an annual income larger or as large as the sum he originally took out with him, would excite some interest in the Stock Exchange—& might be made very attractive?—But joking apart—I am disappointed that this most delightful Country instead of being as it ought to be the 'glory & wonder of all lands'—should be only now a 'bye word & a scorn'—The first levee our most gracious Queen holds, must take the General to Town to 'kiss hands' for his new Regiment—& I shall commission him, when he goes to repay you the debt I owe you on account of the 'Australian Church'.—In the meantime accept my Thanks & with the united regards of Sir Ralph, Miss Darling & myself believe me

Your very sincerely obliged
Eliza Darling.

Source: Macleay Papers, to W.S. Macleay.



77 *News of the Ryries, 1838*

The Ryrie family came when the children of the first marriage were grown up, and the sons soon scattered over the southern districts, forming stations such as Springfield which still show what the early way of life was like. Janet, the only daughter, remained with her father for some years, nursing her delicate stepmother, smoothing household upsets, and taking a mother's place with the school-age half-brothers.

Janet married Dr Francis Wallace, one brother wed his stepmother's sister, another a daughter of Lieut-Colonel Mackenzie. The first part of the letter deals with another brother's overlanding. Janet's answer came from Sydney. Ann Gore (L. 75) felt the influence of the empty spaces of the interior, but Janet Ryrie gives a cosier picture.

I am truly sorry again to tell you that Mrs Ryrie has been confined to bed for three days from the same cause as formerly, spitting blood. She was getting on so well as John told you, that it is quite disheartening being thrown back again. Dr Wallace has been most attentive in attending her and says it proceeds from the stomach and that her lungs are quite sound, which agrees entirely with Dr Wilson and Dr Cowper's opinion, but at the same time, he is afraid there is something he does not know of and he has been treating her differently from

before this happened. She has had leeches on twice and is now getting an ointment to rub on her breast to raise a blister. It has made her weak again but I trust she may soon recover. We are still at Mrs How's where she has everything so comfortable.

It does not put Miss How either to inconvenience as they have plenty of room. Lilly and Amy are also close at hand. I too am here to do any little thing. The washing is given out and then Papa gets any extra thing Mrs Ryrie requires, such as fowls etc. but remember, these little ministrations are not to be repeated neither take notice of them in your letters. I only tell you as I was afraid you might think it too much in us to be living on them. They seem to like it and it enlivens them particularly Papa being here. Mr How is quite well again and looks stouter than ever he did—Eliza too is well and kind as ever. Mr. Howston Mitchell was staying here when we came, as he always does when in Town. He is a very entertaining man when you are acquainted with him and has a great deal of humour about him, but before strangers is perfectly silent. He went to the Hunter for some days but will soon be back. He is very like Major Mitchell and therefore no beauty.

It is very likely we shall remain in Town for some time as Mrs. Ryrie seems to like it, besides it is almost necessary she should be near a medical attendant. As soon as there are lodgings vacant I hope Papa will procure them. I hope you will come by water and not by land. There have been no accounts from Stewart and we are wearying for the return of the 'Currency Lass'. Ross, I think, is the Cap's name. Stewie told me he was a pleasant man which was one reason for going in her—he said too he had got the loan of a quadrant from Dr Wallace and a book of tables from Mr. Scott so there was no danger of losing their way. Stewart's health was very good when I left. I am glad to say it was his mind and in his imagination that he was unwell and what he wanted was a change of scene—he looked well and ate well; his thinking himself unwell arose from Hypochondriacism, both Drs W. and C. said, and he required something to interest and arouse him which he had not at Arnprior. But it is not to be trifled with, the mind I mean being affected, for it will soon affect the body. Oh, how well he can speak when he likes. Every afternoon nearly he and I either rode or walked and many a delightful conversation we had. I would try to argue against him just to bring him out as it were, tho' of his opinion all the time, and I rather think he does not dislike a little argument in which he resembles Papa. You will smile no doubt at my attempting to argue.

I shall scarcely have room to give you any Sydney news. Mrs. Jones and Mrs Ferriter we see almost every day—the former is quite well again, she wishes me to stay there but I cannot leave at present. We called at Govt. House but did not see Lady Gipps. Very few persons see her when they call—she rides about Town on horseback a great deal and they say is a very plain but amiable person. The day before yesterday we went to hear MacQuarie Cowper preach the annual sermon for the diffusion of Christian Knowledge in St James'. We met Mr. Riddell [Colonial Treasurer] on our way who asked us to go to his seat which we did. He delivered his sermon very well but I felt rather disappointed at it, having heard him praised so much. I should like to hear him on a Sabbath day. It is disgraceful how the Presbyterian ministers are quarrelling. Really, you have no pleasure in going to hear them and their preaching is so bad it does not make up for it. Dr. Lang is going home again, he is a restless man.

Alick and David are boarded at the Australian College with Dr. Aiken. Every afternoon they come here for a short time and bring their tickets to me to keep. Alick has sixteen and Davy twelve already. They seem to like the school very much and are quite amused with Mr. Mackenzie's lectures. Davy said yesterday he was lecturing on the centre of gravity.

Mrs. Ryrie sends her kind love and with the same from Papa and I and earnest wishes for your welfare and safety, believe me ever my dearest James,

Your affectionate sister,
JANE RYRIE.

Miss How sends her kind regards. John his love.
If you can send a little butter I wish you would.
Write soon and come soon.

Source: Ryrie Papers (NLA). My copy of this letter by courtesy of Miss Janet Ryrie.



78 Anne Deas Thomson to Sir Richard Bourke

The bond between Anne Deas Thomson, *née* Bourke, and her father was always strong. In New South Wales she had had to take her mother's place and to console him as best she could for his loss. As wife of Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, she defended Bourke's memory against all criticism, suffering from all the abuse his liberal ideas had brought into the open.

Mrs Macarthur admired her; Lady Franklin, when visiting New South Wales in 1839, found her too full of self-importance; but both agreed on her accomplishments. The extracts deal with public events and the contemporary climate of opinion.

In a long letter from Sydney in February 1839 to her father, who had returned to England via South America, where he had served when in the Army, she tries to feel herself close to him.

I have been enjoying a quiet afternoon in my room, the children are out walking and I have been reading over your dear and interesting letters—they make me feel very sad, as I often thought of your undertaking that long journey without one of us, and feared you would be lonely,—often I wished it had been possible I could have been with you, and should have made light of the difficulties your *followers* found it hard to put up with—and enjoyed the more the beauty and romance of the country—but it could not be,—I now feel quite happy that I saw so much of *this* country with you and look back with pleasure to our nice journeys—oh my dear Papa when shall I ever see you again? those happy Parramatta days will never come again, and I can only think on them until I am low and wretched, which I know I ought not to be—I shall be much happier when I have once heard from you at home—and know you to be happy among your family & friends—Your commission for Valparaiso is only waiting a ship—I have got beautiful stuffed birds, and very well set up—on a

branch—they are to be packed by the bird stuffers—The live ones I am expecting every day, they are on their way from Mr Iceley—a king parrot, a cockatoo parrot and a Rosella bird the latter I got here—M^r Botts who is in communication with Valparaiso, will give me the earliest information of a vessel, and I will attend to your directions about writing &c—

I believe I mentioned in a former letter, that Sir G. Gipps had not confirmed the rewards promised by Gov^t to female prisoners upon their good behaviour,* he has not yet done anything in that matter and I think will get us into a scrape—The applications to Edward's office have been much more numerous than was expected, but he cannot give them any satisfactory answers—There was a shipload landed about a fortnight ago, but tho' the ladies attended in the dockyard, no rewards were held out to the women—Instead, Sir George attended and gave them a very long speech, which I hear, for I was not there, was neither in character nor well delivered—He singled out those who had behaved ill on board, one in particular who was the ring leader and who he had been told, tho' without truth, had been transported before this time—she came forward and answered him: Edward says she was quite collected, and spoke with a great deal of firmness and like a well informed person—She denied having been there before—The Governor sent her for three years to the cells, but has been obliged to release her, as he has been informed by the Chief Justice that he had no power so to do—The Governor is all for strict discipline among the women at the Factory—you are remembered at the Factory for your humanity in not allowing the soldiers to hurt the women at the time they were called in to quell the riot of the third class—I learn this from the nurse I have got from the Factory for my little Susan—who is as fond and careful of Lizzie as ever—Both the little girls are quite well thank God—Suzy, altho' she has a convict nurse, improves daily . . .

30th Yesterday Edward having given himself a half holiday we took a boat and a little luncheon and went up to Tarban Creek, to see how the asylum was getting on—it is not yet finished nor will it be for some time—M^r and M^d Digby are however living there, and the former went all over the building with us—He is getting one side of the building completed to receive the lunatics before the very hot weather begins, when they are so wretchedly crowded in Liverpool Asylum—M^r Digby seems an intelligent person, and says he was for eight or nine years under D^r Sutherland† in the asylum at Chelsea, he had no written rules or instructions by him, at least not printed ones, but is going to put together some written observations and general rules, which he will send to Edward—The work he says is better finished than in any asylum he has ever seen and thinks they have gone to unnecessary expense in plastering the cells and passages—Both the situation and plan of the building he thinks good, but suggested some amendments in the lighting and ventilating of the cells—by placing a ventilator opposite the window of each cell, so as to allow of a thorough air at will—also holes in the wall to admit light into the narrow passage leading to the cells for the worst patients which M^r Lewis has left in the dark—the building seems to be complete all but the hanging of the doors and windows—the verandas have still to be shingled and plastered—M^r Digby seems to think a resident physician quite necessary—The rooms over the main building are very cheerful and have a very pretty view—if they are to be inhabited, M^r Digby has a plan for securing the windows which will not disfigure the building—What

* Darling had instituted the practice of rewarding female prisoners for good behaviour and Bourke continued it.

† The Dr Sutherland Anne mentioned was a celebrated early reformer of treatment of the mentally ill.

he proposes has all the appearance of a Venetian blind but so secured as not to allow of its position being altered by the patient—We did not see M^r Digby as she is unwell.

5th Oct—

I went with M^r Anderson yesterday to ascertain what state the plants were in that you sent by D^r Dobie—The bread fruit I am sorry to say are all dead, M^r Anderson had sown the seed that you sent but fears it will not come up—The oranges are doing very well, and are fine healthy plants—also two of the Cambuan plants are doing well—The shaddock seed has been sown but has not yet come up—The trees from England arrived a few days ago by the 'Letitia'—out of the 27000 trees, several thousand have failed, but there [are] still a good many alive—They are in the lower garden by the sea, but well protected from sun and winds, and duly watered—as indeed they must be, we are most sadly in want of rain—The prices are high and I fear will be higher—M^r Anderson does not yet inhabit his new home, as it is not yet complete. The house erected for the gang at work in the garden is finished and inhabited—When the gate is hung and the yard cleared out it will be completed.

She ended on a wistful note:

God bless you my dearest Papa do not forget me—and believe me how often we think of and regret you—Edward joins me in kind love

Ever y^e most affect and dutiful child

AM Deas Thompson

Sir Richard Bourke K.C.B.

Source: Bourke Papers, Set 403, Items 1-8, 404-9 (ML).



79 Mrs A.J. King to her English Cousins

Marnie Bassett in *The Governor's Lady* gives a picture of the peaceful close of a life of many vicissitudes. This letter, with the small rub of her son-in-law's inhospitality offset by the pleasure in finding herself appealed to as an authority on the colony she as well as her husband had once shaped in policy, shows a satisfying rounding off of an active life.

Mrs A.J. and P.G. King were cousins of the old Mr Gidley whose death Mrs King regrets so deeply. Mrs Thorp was his daughter.

14 February 1840

My dear Cousins Mr & Mrs Thorp

This day I have the pleasure of receiving a packet of letters from you presented by Mr Jeffreys of the Lord Eldon—from my not perusing your letters immediately he felt strange and I fear we did not quite receive Mr Jeffreys as he might expect. All the family



Anna Josepha King. Oil painting by unknown artist. Held in the National Gallery of Australia. Courtesy of Mr R.W.L. King.

were dressing for dinner & company in the Home. I felt a little at a loss what to do by inviting him to stay Mr Macarthur came in to the Drawing Room and in his usual manner soon got acquainted—but as he did not ask Mr Jeffrey to stay [to] dinner I felt it necessary to apologise to him for not asking him to stay longer but that I hoped for the pleasure seeing him again he offered to take anything to you I might have to send I told him I should have a long letter prepared for Mr Thorp & that I should be happy to send it by him. In fact I never [felt] more sorry that I could not just then pay Mr Jeffrey more attention. When he called it was rather late in the afternoon but he went & promised to let me know when the Lord Eldon should be ready to leave the colony.

I soon perused your letters my dear Cousins with great pleasure & I am happy that you were all in good health at the date of your letters. I can sincerely believe that you are really thinking of leaving England to settle yourselves in this colony had you taken such a step some years gone by my husband could have had it in his power to advance your comfort &

to have added the *indulgences* then allowed to settlers but now it is very different. Here is much uphill work to be done before a family can get settled [illegible] We shall all be glad to see you and yours settled among us—you will do right to think of this change before making up your mind. Mr Thorp has given me immense questions to answer I have requested a very clever friend of mine to answer each question very *particularly* and it appears to me to be very correct. We all think Mr Thorp has made a very *judicious* inquiry & it has been very carefully answered. If every person would take the same steps before they take the trouble & expence of coming with their families to settle here much disappointment vexation & expence would be saved. We are all of opinion the accounts of this Colony is very *much exaggerated* from what it really is—

In fact the place is so over-full with people that in Sydney not a Home is to be got & those small huts which may be got are at such an immense Rent & everything in proportion is double—even since my last return that it is quite shocking—but the climate,—the fine climate is beyond everything *good* altho we have more changes than we ever experienced before that it is pure fine air & a delightful change from that of England.

I hope my dear Mrs Thorp you will not think I have said all this to deter [you] & your family from coming out but as you desire a true statement I have considered it right you should have it & not in any way to deceive you—Believe me I should be most happy were you here—and your dear worthy Husband filling a Church I am persuaded he would have a congregation—say so to your Husband & that I hope he will be pleased when he reads the careful way his requests have been answered.

. . . Capt King lives at a great distance from me—Mr Copland Lethbridge also, they will be glad to hear of you all & they will be greatly surprised to see you & your wife in this Colony. I reside now with my dear Maria [Mrs Hannibal Macarthur] & am very happy free of the Plague of Servants the greatest privation here, you ask me what servants you may take—I say *none*—a good man servant you may bring may be useful on the voyage as a comfortable steady servant—that would be the only servant you could possibly need, having your husband with you he of course would be quite sufficient.

I hope if you do resolve on so long a journey that you may find yourselves as I have always been [words illegible]

I have to bless God for the enjoyment of such good health as I have always had, how different from my poor sister—she has never enjoyed health during all her past life—I am fearful to hear of her Death—as then I should be the last of my dear Mother's family. I mourned greatly to learn of the Death of your dear Father I loved him much I lost an affectionate correspondent in him—his letters always cheered & made me happy, as also all my family.

But he is gone to his long home where I pray we may all meet in God's good time—all three of my family near me desire their love & best wishes with my own to you & yours & also to every branch of your family—and believe me my dear Cousins to remain

Yours affectionately

March the	maiden name	A.J. King
2d/40	Combe.	Anna Josephina King

Source: Mrs A.J. King to Rev Mr Thorp and his wife, Letter from The Vineyard (AK 1/9 ML).



80 *Maria Radford Answers 'Like the Frank Good Lady as You Are'*

The proposal and acceptance are taken from the story of A.B. Sparke (see G. Abbott and G. Little, *The Respectable City Merchant*) in a book that makes curiously interesting reading, especially in the passages that throw much more light than is usual on a Victorian's domestic arrangements and a husband's sympathy for his suffering wife and the embryos she lost. Maria was a doctor's widow who had lost five children already, tragically, by fire and from cholera and by drowning, and who was to bear six more. She suffered further from the shock of Sparke's insolvency, the loss of her home, and the humiliation of his business failure. He was considerate, gentle, romantic. Susan Dowling (L. 84), writing to J.S. Dowling, should not have pencilled 'cork leg' against a reference to him in an earlier letter of hers.

The letter to which this is a reply, and from which Sparke's tribute to her frankness is drawn, was prompted by a curious contretemps: 'As your inexorable landlady seems determined to oppose your residence under her roof longer than the 1st of May I beg at once to offer you an asylum at Tempe. This may be done with the utmost propriety if you will allow yourself to be styled the lady of the land and of its owner.'

My dear Mr Spark

I have indeed no hesitation in returning an immediate answer to the communication you honored me with this morning, nor could I in justice to my own feelings give you other than answer of *peace* and assure you in all sincerity and confidence that I am yours, ever affectionately

Maria Radford
April 9th 1840

Source: G. Abbott and G. Little, *The Respectable City Merchant* (Sydney, 1976), p. 119.



81 Mrs Dunlop: the Aborigines and the Press

Eliza Hamilton Dunlop was one of those Irish women of the Protestant Ascendancy who were intensely patriotic. Her first husband, James Law, died young, leaving her with two children, one of whom followed her to Australia. Eliza travelled to India, where her father and brothers were lawyers. She arrived to find her father dead, and was surprised to discover she had two sisters, half-castes, whom her brothers would not acknowledge.

Remarried, she came to Australia, where she experienced poverty, the unemployment of her husband, and finally the death of her daughter. Her sympathy for the native people may have grown from her shock over her sisters, or from her contact, while in charge of a small post office in the north, with the local tribe, whose physique and courage aroused the sympathy and admiration of Mary Ogilvie as well (L. 85).

This letter to the *Sydney Herald* was in answer to the paper's criticism. The editor replied that he had not disparaged her poetic skill but deplored her ignorance of the Aboriginal mentality.

Extract

November 29, 1841.

The Aboriginal Mother.

Prejudicta opin' obruit justicium.

The author of the Aboriginal Mother takes leave to notice the favor bestowed on that poem by the learned correspondent of the *Herald*. And to return acknowledgement for the candid review and graphic delineation of how such a matter should have been represented, to meet as well 'the Color of the Times' as his conception of a New South Wales audience. Admitting his critical acumen in discerning that the *Aboriginal Mother* was not calculated for the meridian of Sydney, it is added that it was not intended for any of the high southern latitudes. But however much the idea is to be deprecated, had its origin in the hope of awakening the sympathies of the English nation for a people rendered desperate and revengeful by continued acts of outrage. Painfully sensible of great literary demerit; and of a deficiency in poetical imagery, but above all in having such *mal-a-propos* taste as to select so inexpedient a subject.

The author did hope that even in Australia the time was past when the Press would lend its countenance to debase the native character or support an attempt to shade with ridicule ties stronger than death, which bind the heart of woman, be she Christian or savage . . .

Source: Margaret De Salis, *Two Early Colonials by a Great Granddaughter* (Sydney, 1967), p. 103.



82 *The Vineyard Daughters Go North*

Apart from the interest of Annie's enthusiasm for garden planning, the news of Lady Mary FitzRoy's death, and the details of Emmeline's wedding, the extracts have a point of particular interest: the sudden and complete identification of the two Leslie wives with the family's Scottish-gentry viewpoint. The letters come from the correspondence of Catherine 'Kate' Leslie (*née* Macarthur), whose sister Emmeline, later Mme de Falbe, married a younger George Leslie of Warthill. Their mother, Anna Maria (who signed her letters 'Marie') Macarthur, wife of Hannibal, are likewise addressed to her two sons-in-law's mothers. Annie was another of the elder group of sisters in this large family, her husband being Captain Wickham, a former officer of the *Beagle*, and later police magistrate at Morton Bay. Like her Elizabeth Farm cousins she had good knowledge of botany and her plants were ultimately the nucleus of the Newstead Brisbane Garden.

In Sydney for medical treatment, she suffered a relapse and died suddenly.

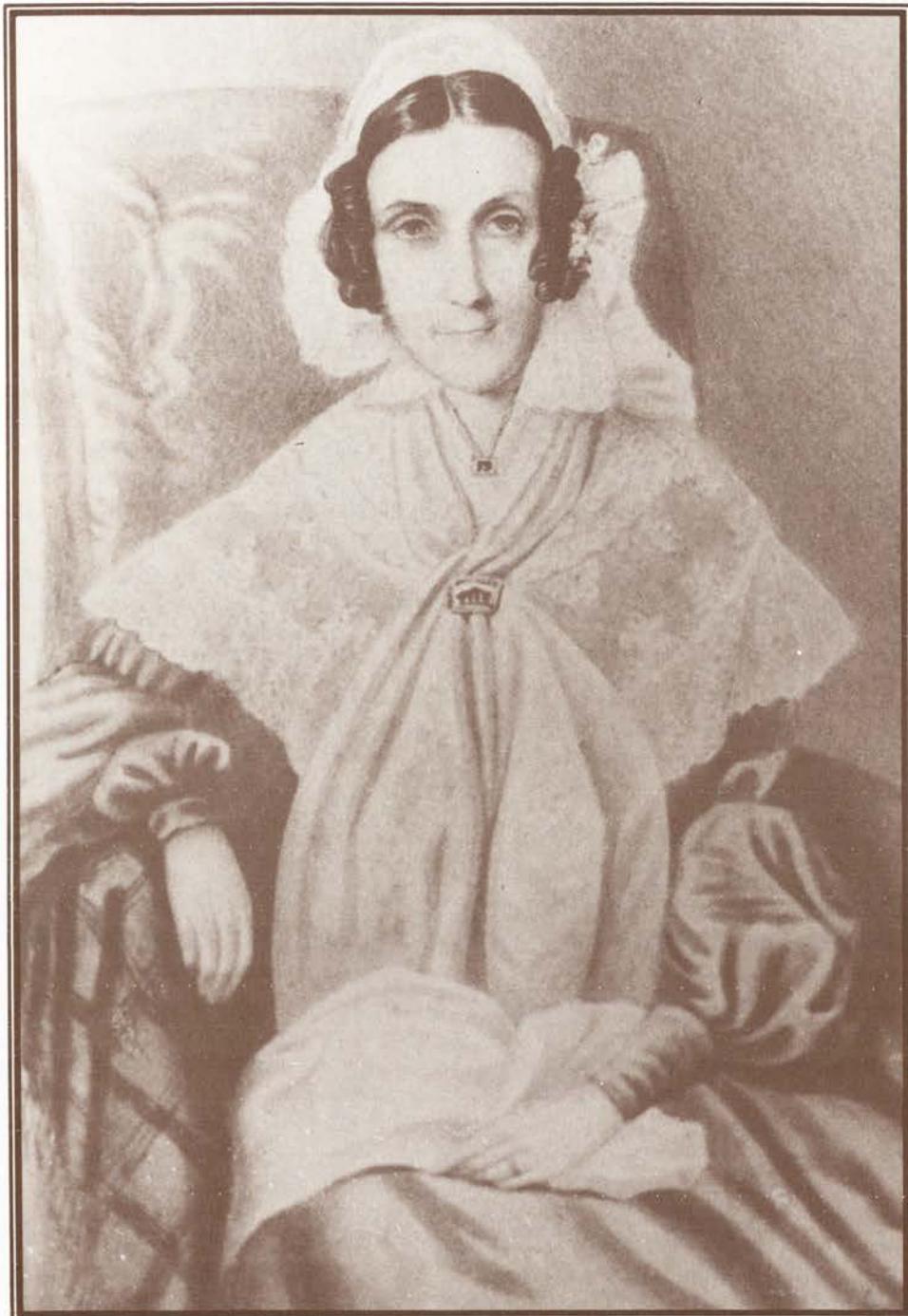
Wattie and Willie were Leslie relations who spent some time at Camden with the Macarthur cousins. Both Patrick and George Leslie were pioneers of the Darling Downs.

Extracts

I am delighted to go to Moreton Bay for I see in every way it is the place where I can best do my duty as a wife & sister, & I never care for society when I have P.W. & G., their afften. to me & to each other is quite unusual & I know well we shall be very happy at the station. I need not tell you what a trial I had in parting from my own dear Patrick this morg.

She then touches on recent heavy money losses suffered by her husband:

. . . I am sorry we must disappoint you all & ourselves no less in not coming home, but after all it will be best, I think. I do not mean to come fr. Moreton Bay till I come down to go home to Scotland I have seen quite enough of N.S.W. the last 10 months to make me say I never wish to come back, so changed is the country that I am sure Papa would go home if he could. We will go home as soon as we can & you may be sure we shall not come home like old Indians *very rich* for it would keep us here too long; & my earnest wish is that Willie should go home . . . We have recd our letter by Mrs. Williams of P. Philip but not the box [it has] not come yet. You *could* not send me anything more useful than tape, pins, etc. etc. in fact *useful* things always before ornaments. If I go to the woods any thing useful & strong will be the best for me. It is *useful* things that you have the most trouble obtain here. I long to see my treasures I hope Pat will think them like he wished so much to have had a peep at them before he started—how lost I feel without him. How glad I shall be to find myself on the way to Moreton Bay. Do not be anxious about me for I know whatever happens we shall be together & have each other & what a comfort it is to feel that we cannot be disunited & our interests are all one. Take great care of yourself dearest Mrs. Leslie by the time



Anna Maria (Mrs Hannibal) Macarthur in late middle age, c. 1850. Reproduced from Mitchell Library photograph by courtesy of Mrs L.K. Macarthur Brown.

I come home with yr dear Grandson. he is a dear Pet. I will tell you of him & anything else soon . . .

In December 1847 Mrs Hannibal Macarthur wrote to her opposite number at Warthill to share the details of the wedding of a younger daughter to a younger Leslie son:

Extract

. . . Dear George has long shared my love, and I deem it one of our best Blessings, that a good Providence has bestowed one so exemplary to protect my child.

This morning early—George and Mr M— went to Sydney—the latter returns tonight; but the former goes in to Parrt with 2 W. Donaldsons, Miss Donaldson Mr & Mrs Fanning, and George's best man—Capt. Hoseason of the 'Inflexible' Steamer, where they dine—we shall be very quiet at Vineyard this evening. I have been very ill for the last 5 weeks, and have not left my room—I reluctantly gave up going to Church; but hope to receive my guests after the ceremony . . . [then follows a guest list of eighteen names].

All my family are absent. Neither Capt. K [King] or the Camden people could come —Mr Anderson ill—therefore many of our connections will be absent.

I will take everything as it occurs—knowing how deeply anxious you will be to receive every tiding of one so truly & deservedly dear—Dear George is most *universley respected*, even persons of *mature years*, not only ask, but follow George's *advice*. Of the dresses I will now speak—Emmeline has a very handsome Tarlaton muslin—2 skirts—beautifully embossed all down the front, and bottom of the skirt—over white silk—made high—a very large long lace scarf $\frac{3}{4}$ wide thrown over her, white large flower in her hair—Lady Mary gave her the scarf 'Walter, you would like to see her'? She looks very well—Emma plain white muslin—I will now put this aside, and write as circumstances may arise, and can only believe, (as an apology for the irregular manner in which I write) that it will give you pleasure—particularly knowing as I do—a ship will sail before George can write again—. . .

A few months later, the remaining unmarried Vineyard daughter, Emma, added her quota of social events, the chief news, subject of so many contemporary letters, being the violent death of Lady Mary FitzRoy when the carriage overturned in the steep road from Government House Parramatta. Sir Charles was driving, and the party was on its way to another society wedding.

May 5 1848

My dear Mrs Leslie—Mamma received a very kind letter from you in which you expressed a wish to hear from me & it is with much pleasure I will now sit down to give you an account of all near to us. My darling sister Emmie, seems truly happy and it does give my heart sincere joy to think of her very great happiness altho' I sadly miss her and I wish much she was nearer to me but I write her long letters & in return receive nice accounts of her home which she was charmed with and all its pretty views far exceed her expectations still I must own I sadly miss her for we were nearer to each other than any of the others—they speak of paying us a visit in November & I pray God the great blessing may be granted us of welcoming dear Emmie & George back. I think George is worthy of my dearest sister and



Catherine (Mrs P.) Leslie



Emmie (Mrs G.) Leslie



Annie (Mrs G.C.) Wicklam

The Vineyard daughters. Courtesy of the Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

that is paying him the highest compliment I can for I do think her a treasure & you will not I hope blame me for praising my own dear sister. It saddened her bridal days much of the death of our much loved Friend Lady Mary Fitzroy I *cannot* write of it—I trust however she is now as happy as I could wish her for she was a very true Friend to us poor old Lady! I am happy to say my dear sisters and brothers are all well. James, is at Arthursleigh, Charles, we expect tomorrow with Agnes, who expects to be confined in August. George, has just been ordained and both his reading, and preaching, are very highly spoken of he is engaged to a Miss Priddle, who is a very pretty nice Girl—but I do not think they will be married for another year. John is at Port Stephens, at present living with dear Libby, and assisting Philip King, in the ADC's service. Arthur is truly fortunate in being with my kind brother in law George who is instructing him in the mysteries of squatting, while with them he has a happy home & now for the ladies which should have come first. Libby is much better & her two boys are I hear worthy scions of the Kings & Annie, whose good man bought Newstead (pray pardon this blotting ink) is just settled in the same happy abode. Kate, you hear of from Emmeline & herself. Mary & her 3 boys & I Miss [?] are very well at Manar and last but truly not least my good Mother & Father are very well. Mamma altho' still subject to headaches *wonderfully stronger* and desires her very affectionate love to you I am very anxious to hear of dear Wattie I wrote him an account of Emmeline's wedding but at the time I was so truly sad about poor Lady Mary I could not write as I would & I often feared since that my letter was very unsatisfactory but no words can tell what a mockery & what a sign of the uncertainty of earthly happiness, the present then was to the past. Poor Sir Charles, will I think still keep the Government, they were the kindest friends & my heart grieves for they are surely afflicted. Tell Wattie Robert Master is now A.D.C. The Governor expects his eldest son out but I don't think as Aide-de-Camp. I hope dear Mrs Leslie you will be able to read this shocking scrawl, and with my love to all & my particular love to dear Wattie believe me always yr. affectionately

Mrs Leslie
Warthill
Old Rain
Aberdeenshire
Prepaid. N.B.

E.J. MacArthur

Source: Macarthur-Leslie Letters (Oxley Library) and Macleay Papers (ML).

Annie Wickham to W.S. Macleay:

Brisbane Moreton Bay,
October 4

My dear Sir,

I feel extremely obliged by your kind remembrance of us, in the valuable collection of plants, which were delivered to us by Mr Jones, as well as your kind letter, and offer of repeating the supply, at some future period.

I will most thankfully avail myself of this next year, and in the meantime I have had much pleasure in endeavouring to collect some of the bulbs you name; I must prevail upon some of our acquaintances to obtain some of these roots & I also must try & procure some Bunya seeds for you.—We shall be more prepared to dispose of plants in proper situations and good

soil next year, as we are about to form a garden on the river bank about a mile and a half from Brisbane.

Our present garden is most unfavourably situated, but I am nursing all my pets with the hope of soon placing them in better soil;—therefore with your permission I will at some future time, remind you of your promise. I fear some (perhaps two or three) of the plants you have now sent have perished—there is not a vestige of the Cape Heaths remaining not even a withered stem—and I fear the silver tree will not recover—I suspect they have been exposed to the sea airs on the voyage—which is highly injurious however I have been fortunate in receiving so many in good order.

Captain Wickham begs to join me in best regards, and with repeated thanks for your kindness, believe me very truly yours

Annie Wickham

The Salvia Splendens is a great treasure—I have the Salvia patens. I will send you a list of my possessions when I again trouble you with a note.

Source: Leslie Papers (Oxley Library).



83 *The N.S.W. Carpet-baggers*

Individual peculiarities would have made the Lowes misfits almost anywhere, even later in London, where the wife of Colonel Mundy, who had known them slightly in Sydney, reported maliciously to James Macarthur of Camden:

... exactly opposite to us live Mr and Mrs Lowe! at the far end of the Square—who, I beg to make known, I have never visited nor acknowledged & never shall do so—I declined their acquaintance at Sydney & have still less wish to know them now!—You cannot think *how much worse* Mrs Lowe looks dressed not very fine & grown very red & fat, *even* than she did when I saw her last, riding from Sydney to Cugee with a *basket of mutton* on her arm! which fact I am afraid I maliciously stated to some of Mr Lowe's patrons! It was at a ministerial party at Lord Granville's I saw Mrs Lowe—they are not in any society here, except when they get to a *government* party as a Ministerial *under strapper!*

Colonel and Mrs Mundy, relatives of the FitzRoys, spent some time in New South Wales; he wrote *Our Antipodes*. Robert Lowe was an albino, prematurely white-haired, and his eyes were invisible behind dark glasses. He had come to Australia counting on seven years to make his fortune before blindness overtook him. With a tongue to which fear added a special cruelty, he was totally unassimilable in Sydney. His wife—tall,

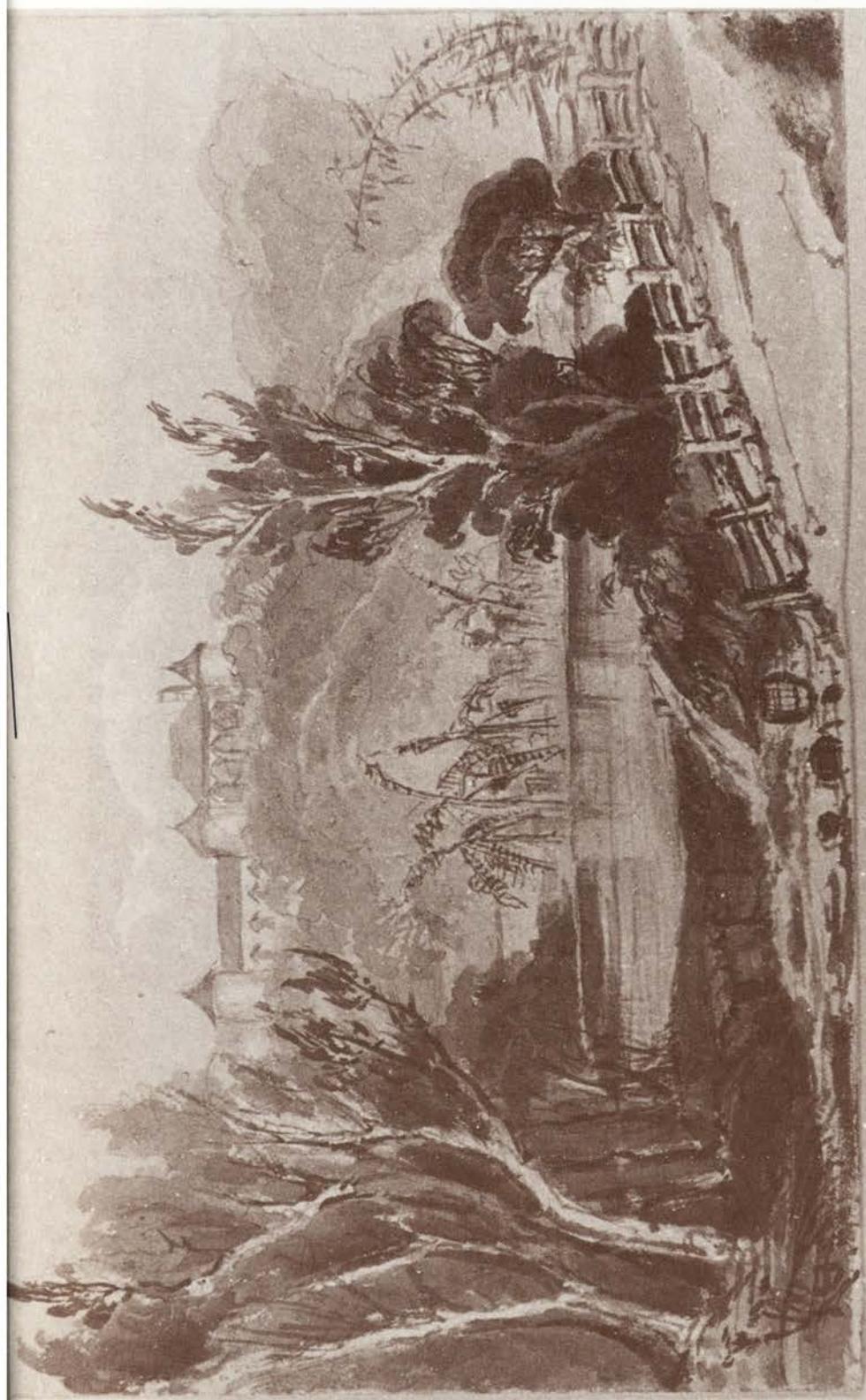
awkward, a gifted painter, and as skilled with axe and mattock as in haggling over the vegetables she sold from her garden—was equally alien. Her Coogee home was frequented by men, not women, after a scandal she spread which wrecked a home. Socially secure women like Lady Gipps and Mrs James Macarthur, and the lonely, embittered Mrs Aspinall (wife of a Sydney merchant, who was slightly crippled and very critical of Australian society), appreciated her quality, and recognised the private cross she bore: her husband admitted to intimates that he had proposed by mistake to the wrong sister.

But their main offence was their honesty. Many English residents were in Sydney to earn enough to leave it, but the Lowes said so aloud. Both admitted that they had come to Sydney, like the northerners nicknamed 'Carpet Baggers' who descended on the Southern States after the American Civil War, to make all they could before returning to their home. He was wholehearted about his motives. She, poor woman, came to love her place of exile, and remained divided in everything except her love for the man whose dislike of her has been handed down in a number of cruel jibes.

Mrs Georgiana Lowe to relatives:

Extracts

I still admire this country as much as ever and every day find some new beautiful view that I have overlooked that makes me long to sketch . . . All things here are so English with regard to society & manner of living, that I never feel as if removed from home. I feel as if I were but some hundred miles away from my friends & it is only when I feel the wish to hear how all are & what you are all doing that the distance forces itself upon my mind. You would be surprised if you were to meet so many agreeable & really polished people. I must say except in Chester & the neighbourhood I have never fallen in with more agreeable society. Lady Gipps quite agrees with me & only excepts Chester & Cheshire she has seen much more of people & places than I have. Of course she excepts London. Robert likes Lady Gipps extremely & says she is most agreeable & entertaining she is really very clever & takes very great interest in all things about her. She is also most kind in her opinions of persons & makes every allowance for people's feelings though at the same time she has a quick perception of their faults. She resembles Mrs Fuldon much but has not Mrs Fuldon's failings. I think her the most truly amiable person I ever met with. Sir George Gipps we like, but think he is not a person that is quickly known I do not fancy that Robert quite knows as yet how far he shall like him . . . I cannot express to you the kindness we have received from Sir George & Lady Gipps. They have stored our furniture in the store at the Government House sent their own men with boats to do it for us saving us an immense expence in the kindest manner, hoped we would stay with them as long as possible—urged us to remain here & make use of their carriages, servants, &c whilst they are away for a fortnight (Sir George Gipps having business in the South), in fact there are no bounds to their kindness. Independently of the agreeableness of being so received this is an immense advantage to us, making us so important in people's opinions & will be very serviceable to Robert.



The Lowe's home, Coogee, by Georgiana Lowe (Viscountess Sherbrooke). Courtesy of the Mitchell Library,
State Library of New South Wales.



Government House, Parramatta, 1843, by Mrs Georgiana Lowe (Viscountess Sherbrooke). Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

We have found a house in Macquarie St with an exquisite view of the Harbour from the windows, it is close to the entrance of the Government Domain. We are to pay £180 per annum, rent being immense, meat cheap, only 2d per lb, wages for a housemaid £16 per annum, Tea 2s6d, white sugar 5d or 6d, brown 3d Butter 3d per lb, vegetables very cheap and good, fruit very cheap—they feed the pigs with peaches. I am sure I shall delight in this country. The Harbour is like an immense inland lake with bays that would take weeks to explore, rocks rising direct from the water & *such* flowers growing upon them. To me as yet it is a land of enchantment & neither Robert nor I find it too hot. I am astonished & charmed with Sydney it is built on a broad promontory rock of some elevation. The streets are up & down hill & the buildings put me in mind of Leamington & Cheltenham of white stone so beautiful in grain as to resemble marble. I never saw such stone in England. The streets are very wide & long with large & very handsome shops. The Norfolk Pines growing about large—white stone villas in the very centre of the town and gardens redolent with orange flowers & also flowers I have no names for. To think of being able to make money in such a place, one's idea of money-making is confined to black streets and melancholy holes. There is no smoke about the Town, wood being burnt & merely fires in the houses for cooking & no smoky manufactures. I shall make sketches, pencil & coloured & send them home.

. . . Our greatest loss here is want of friends, I cannot like the people I have no similar feelings & the gaieties they think so charming fill me with disgust. I now feel the value of my love for nature to me it supplies society & as long as I am well enough to ride about our shore & above the superb cliffs that overhang the coast I want nothing . . .

. . . It is not strange that Robert so unlike a money making man should be making a fortune—but unless *you* & what other trustees there are to my Father's Will consent to what we wish we must stay here several years longer & I shall perhaps never come home.

All who hear Robert speak both in Court & Council say he is greatly gifted & men who have been in the habit of hearing the best speaking in the House of Commons & at the Bar say he would make his way rapidly in England. The Judges, Sir Alfred Stephen & Mr Dickenson tell Robert it is folly for him to remain here, but we are determined never to have to contend with a limited income & to carry out our plans a large income is the first matter. We do not intend to return home with less than £2,000 a year . . .

How strangely old we shall all be when we meet again, I am quite astonished every year when my birthday comes round to find how old I am. We are likely to have excellent times again for speculation in sheep to purchase, a person with £1000 might make a most excellent thing of it provided he lived on his station . . .

Source: Georgiana Lowe (Viscountess Sherbrooke), Letters to relatives in England (ML: Joint Copying Service); Ruth Knight, *Illiberal Liberal* (Melbourne, 1966).



84 *Susan Spencer (née Dowling) to her Brother, James Sheen*

James, a future judge, was still in England, completing his training in law. So, too, now was a younger brother, Arthur. Susan, now the wife of a clergyman, echoes Rowland Hassall's gloomy views in 1819 on Australian-born girls as wives. She is writing in one of N.S.W.'s recurrent depressions. The local touch—cedar instead of mahogany, as an Australian phrase for hospitality—shows the progress towards a local idiom and consciousness.

July 1st 1844
Parsonage
Raymond Terrace

My dear James

I only received your letter this morning & now hasten to answer it, & by your account of your gains as a Barrister the sooner you reach Sydney the better I should say although I believe there is not much to be Earned here yet you will always be able to have plenty of Food for it is so very cheap for you can get 4 magnificent Legs of Mutton for a Shilling & best Beef for 1 penny a lb & Every thing Else proportionally Low, it would be better for Arthur to come out here again as Steerage Passenger than to live in that wretched Manner he must be doing at present but I suppose he would rather starve in England than show his face in Sydney. You will receive this letter by Frank Hodgson a fine young man who will give you the *Picture of our Parsonage* which I hope you will like & I quite long to see you & show you my little Suzy & by that time there will be perhaps a little nephew as I expect to be confined next month. Vincent comes & sees us very often, he wants a Wife very much to make him comfortable & really there is hardly one agreeable girl in the Colony I Expect unless you bring a Wife with you you will be an old Bachelor for after seeing the English Ladies you will find a difficulty in meeting one out here for I think they are disingenuous both in manners & appearance. Mama writes me word that *Willoughby* is *very ill*. Poor Uncle Vin must be quite overwhelmed with grief seeing his Family dying off one by one in that melancholy manner. I have no doubt you will find Sydney changed, I have not been there for 2 years & should know very few persons for all our old friends are either become Insolvent & obliged to rusticate or married & some Dead. Newington, I hear has become quite melancholy [words illegible] but the old people Louisa & George & the little orphan grandchildren living there. The Brush Farm is just the same as usual the only blank is Mys Jacob who I should say is a good riddance you will be pleased to hear Mys Rutledge is married to a Mr Knox belonging as the blacks would say to the Sugar Company. I believe it is a good match I cannot give any intelligence of Eliza Hodgson but Frank will give you the latest account as he has just left here she will be confined in October. Charlie quite longs to see you with his legs under his cedar for we cannot say Mahogany—& with our united Love to Yourself

Believe me always

to remain

Your affectionate sister

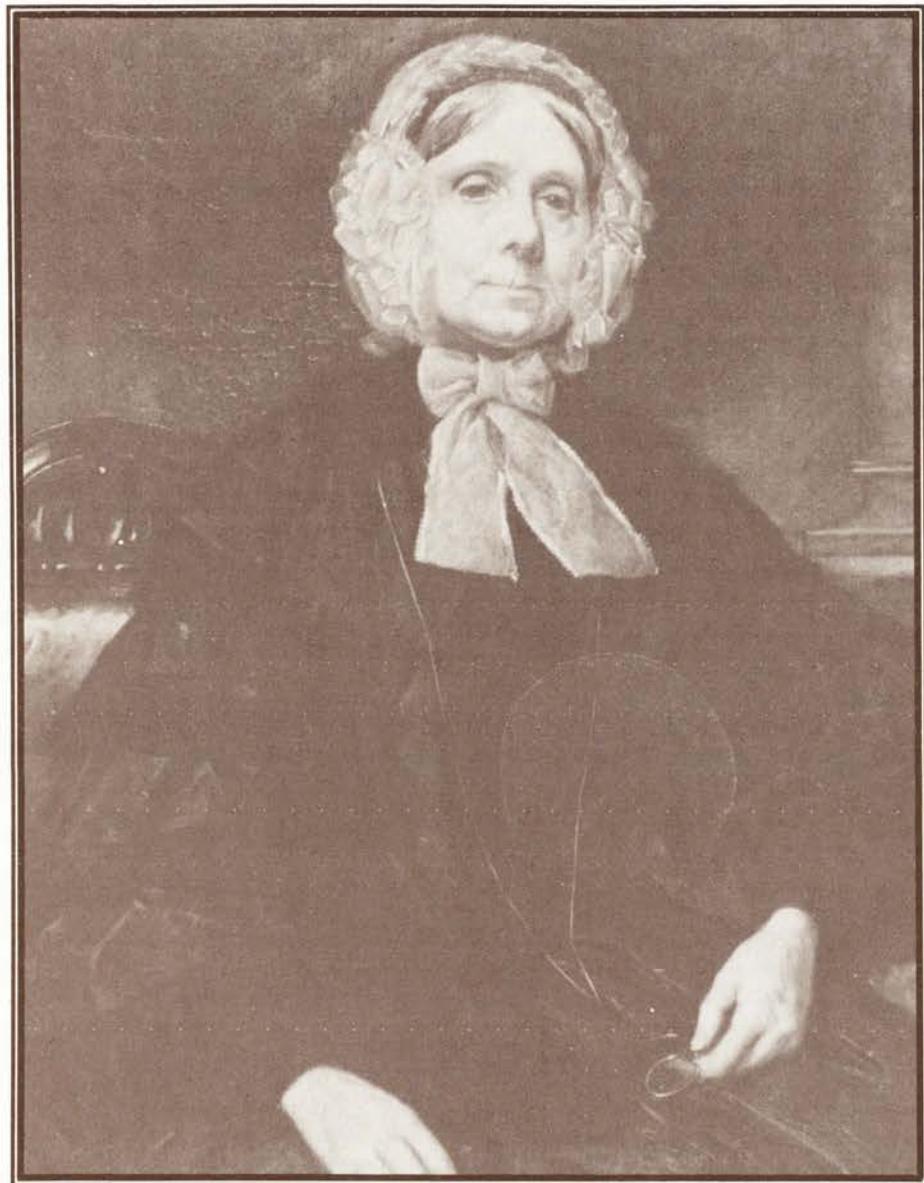
S. Spencer

Source: J.S. Dowling Correspondence (ML).



85 *Mary Ogilvie to her Daughter, Ellen Bundock*

The life of Mary Ogilvie is well documented, and is a story of courage and strength of character. She left a safe and comfortable life in England to accompany her husband and children by bullock cart to their northern



Mrs Mary Ogilvie, c. 1857. Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Hunter River home. Here she had to fit her children for the outside life of gentlefolk and at the same time condition them to their immediate surroundings. One of her most notable attributes was her feeling for the native people who surrounded her, and who caused many anxious moments in some of their outbreaks of aggression, several of which found her alone at the station with her young sons and the babies of the family. She had befriended the Aborigines, and had her sons learn their language; this, and her superb handling of a crisis (attacked by a particularly dangerous group of local Aborigines from a tribe outstanding for physique and vigor, she sent her young sons to talk to the attackers until she had locked her babies away then joined the boys and with calm courage talked the Aborigines into withdrawing), earned her a rare tribute from the Governor of the day.

This extract belongs to her relatively tranquil later middle age—as she grew older she became almost blind.

I need not tell you how glad we were to see Mr Bundock both for his own sake and for the information he could give us *viva voce* about you and the dear little piccaninnies,* and also to see him look so well. I fear he finds Merton but a dull sejour, for your father and I naturally grow more prosy. However the Muswellbrook races take place this week and doubtless he will be repaid for all the dullness he has had to endure. Mind, I do not say he has betrayed any symptoms of being particularly ennuyed. But he is getting into a fidget about the return of the steamer, for the wind is blowing from the south and rain has been falling. I cannot wish the rain to cease, though I should grieve if he were detained, because I cannot bear the thought of your being left without a gentleman . . .

I am not so good a correspondent as you deserve, for I have suffered very much from headaches, after an attack of which I am very much afraid to use my pen at all. I believe they arise from the very inactive life I have, for the weather has been such as to prevent my taking any outdoor exercise except driving out of an evening, and that has been discontinued from the absence on more than ordinary business of the groom in consequence of collecting and sending horses to Bungarabbee. But as I am extraordinarily embonpoint I cannot be very harsh, and your father too is recovering his lost flesh.

* Mrs Ogilvie's kindly familiarity with the Aborigines is shown by her application of 'piccaninnies' to her grandchildren.

Source: George Farwell, *Squatter's Castle* (Melbourne, 1973), printing Ogilvie Family papers.



86 Elizabeth White Robertson Leaves an Incomplete Record

A headstone in the Norfolk Island cemetery gives the end of the story:

Sacred to the memory
of Elizabeth White Robertson
second daughter of Gilbert Robertson
late superintendent of agriculture
Norfolk Island, who died January 11th
1847 aged 24 years.

Mr Robertson, as editor of one of Tasmania's abrasive newspapers, had been in trouble with Governor Arthur and went to Norfolk Island, which, like Newcastle and Port Macquarie, was a place of special punishment for prisoners who were reconvicted in the colony. There his daughter began a letter-journal to Mrs Mordale, her married sister in Tasmania. The surviving entries cover six weeks in September-October 1845. These extracts reflect Elizabeth's early premonitions of her future, or lack of it, a curious family situation with herself forced into the role Mrs Robertson seems to have abandoned, and the stresses inevitable in a small free community restricted in outlook and terrain. Finally there was the perennial pain for a sensitive young girl of seeing gentlemen—and often gentle convicts—caught in a relentless system. She was something of a rebel, and her greatest sympathy was against her own social group and towards the gentlemen convicts.

Extract

. . . When I saw Mr Holman, I always had an idea that he was a fine looking young man, but he is *not* and very far from good looking. I do not like the little I saw of him.

On Wednesday we all went for a walk in the afternoon, and a most beautiful walk we had down to the sea, I lost my veil and gave the messengar two figs of tobacco to find it which he did. Mr Padbury a young gent who is living with Mr Tomes called while we were out. On Saturday we had a dreadful heavy fall of rain I never saw anything like it. Sunday was a most beautiful day, we went to church in the morning to hear Mr Chapman, and heard a very poor sermon, we were only in church an hour & 5 minutes. Mr Rowlands & Mr Padbury were there they walked home with us after church & went on to 'Rowlandville' to dine. When we were returning from church we saw a party of gentlemen coming along the road & made haste home to avoid them. We had scarcely got in before in came Captains Hamilton, Corkcroft, Harding and Lieuts Simmons, Edwards Garstone and they had not been in many minutes when in came Messrs Rowlands & P. I wished them all in France I dislike that as much as anything the people here make Sunday quite a visiting day. they all went away in about an hour except R S H & P. who stopped to tea. Dr Crowl came up at 5 and just as we were seated at tea in walked Dr Ewing and Old Foster the Superintendent. I was fairly sick of visitors and as soon as tea was over I went off to my bed and left

them. I forgot to tell you that Dr Ewing was up to tea on Saturday night and brought up a set of Chessmen he had got made for Meg. Mr Rs says he is quite smitten; he is as great a *Jackass* as ever I met. We were obliged to send our man home with him he was afraid to go by himself. We went today to call on Mrs Farrell and Mrs Tomes they seem homely sort of people also on Mrs Major Arney—she is a very beautiful woman I think & very ladylike, but too ceremonious. This is the first day we have been to the settlement. There are some very nice buildings there but I am very glad we dont live in it. I think Longridge much more pleasant. While we were out Mrs Captain Lavers & Mrs Tyson called & left their cards. When we were coming home we meet the Major on the hill he got off his horse & stopped & had a long chat. We got home about four & just after dinner Mr Chapman & Mr Rogers came in, they stayed to tea & after tea Mr C & Meg played chess & Mr Rowlands & Mother, while Mr Rogers, father, Mary Nicholas & Ann had a game of whist. I never play either chess or cards so I generally slip out & leave them. I cant say I think much of 'Roll it off' it is not true he is engaged to Miss Macpherson, she has left.

The people here think Mr Rogers a very clever gentlemanly man so does father—he is certainly very amusing, I have *read* of such a character, but never met one before. The bushranger Michal Charles, who has been out for a fortnight was taken to day about a mile from here. We had no singing at church last Sunday, the men *refused* to sing—a poor prisoner, a native of Sydney died in the hospital last night, he knew he was dying, and told the Dr that he would 'jump up white man to morrow'.

Poor Barker was sent with the gang to break stones to day. I saw Major Childe and asked him not to send him out, but he said he could not help it.

Tuesday Sep' 17th. I had a quarrel with Meg this morning & have been very miserable all day little Rowlands & Mr Wade are here this evening father & mother are playing chess as usual & the others are playing cards I cannot bear to be in the room of an evening when they are all seated round the table—for when I look round and miss the dear faces that I have been accustomed to—the thought comes into my head that I may never see them again & I can scarcely refrain from tears, I know that it is a foolish feeling and that it is wrong to give way to it, and I trust that in a short time I shall overcome it—about eleven o'clock this morning we were told that there was a ship in sight & in two hours afterwards, the messenger came up to say that the 'Brig' was at Cascade. I knew it was impossible it could be true yet I felt disappointment when I found it was only a whale passing.— Thursday—last night I was very ill & went to bed directly after tea, it was then a beautiful clear night but before nine o'clock it came on such a *dreadful heavy* rain that Mr Rowlands was obliged to stop all night.

This evening Mr Wade & father went with us for a walk as far as 'Hungry Hill' it was a very pretty place. As we were going a pic-nic party returning we were not near enough to see who they were but they looked like so many people coming from the Newtown races there were two carriages crammed as full as they could hold and two gentlemen riding on one horse—I dare say we shall hear tomorrow who were all at it, as we intend going to return the calls of the officers' ladies. I would rather do anything almost. little Rowlands is here this evening as usual & they are all busy either at Chess or cards. George has been a very naughty boy in school today so I have made him come & sit in my room tonight & learn his lesson beside me, he is in a most abominable temper. He goes to the lumber-yard every night from 6 till eight to learn carpentering he is very fond of it and the only way

I can punish him when he is naughty is to prevent his going there for I no more dare strike him that I dare strike father.

Source: Fragment, Dixson Library (DL MS. 163).



87 *The Widow D's Story*

Caroline Chisholm was pre-eminently practical in her approach to the human problem she found in New South Wales. Wherever she went on her journeys in the state, she collected, often from the illiterate, their personal stories, experiences and opinions. These she published. I have ranked these accounts as letters because Caroline Chisholm's object was to inform relatives at home of the migrants' conditions in the new country.

[c. 1845]

It's a good mistress I have, Mrs W———, long may she be spared. Don't say I'm married. £20 and double rations, milk and everything here, done real well. Am with Mrs J.W. ——— say how happy I am with this noble lady; say everybody can't expect to find the same luck; she is from the city of Glasgow. It would be thought strange at home how I should get married, but it's two or three times I might have been married. I was a widow from twenty-two. It's very remarkable, but it was my luck. I am sure I'd recommend my master and mistress, it's good and kind they have been to me. I fancy, I need not care because they are rich, but there is some Mr ——— of Glasgow,—but no I need not care, he is a great gentleman, its long since I saw him,—no, it's the poorer relatives at Perth I would send to, let them know it's a good country to live in,—at home it was a hard life—I could no more live now than I could fly on the living I had at home: the living was coarse at home, here meat, bread, milk, eggs, butter, cheese, in plenty, sugar as much as I can use: now to hoe turnips, its not much toil for what I get. You will give a long description of this place. It's a very good country for good girls,—at home they toil for sixpence a day. Fine country this, good wages, higher than £10 and £15 a year. They dont toil much for it, they win it with all manner of ease, compared to what they get in Scotland. Mention this, my Lady, and if you please, mem, read it over that I may see it's correct—

Somehow this does not ring quite true. Perhaps the editor altered it.

The next extract, written a year earlier, is valuable for the light it throws on English conditions in the 'hungry forties', a period of economic

recession in England and the Potatoe Famine in Ireland. Ellen W———, of London, tells Mrs Chisholm in Sydney on 11 March, 1846:

I arrived in 1833. I am married to George W———; my maiden name was T———; we are doing well; I wish to have out my sister, she was apprenticed from St Giles' parish; she now belongs to Islington where you will most likely hear of her. Her mistress's name is Cox; she did live at No 12 Pleasant Row, Islington. Her name is Emma; she is about twenty-two years of age; will give her a comfortable home. Now mind you tell her that her sister *Mary Ann* is married well, and lives in the *Goulburn* District. My brother is doing well. Neither of us have wanted for anything in this country. Two of my brothers were sent as *parish apprentices* to the Cape of Good Hope. We pay eight shillings a week rent but it is well we get on. Oh, what a difference there is between this country and home for poor folks. I know I would not go back again—I know what England is. Old England is a fine place for the rich but the Lord help the poor.

Source: Caroline Chisholm, *Emigration & Transportation Relatively considered* (London, 1847; pamphlet, ML).



88 *In Defence of Mrs Reibey's Social Status*

This letter, marked in the transcript 'In a Lady's handwriting', was found in a journal of Mary 'Reibey's (also spelt Reiby). It was unsigned and undirected, and was probably prompted by whisperings and innuendoes inspired by the financial success and social rehabilitation of her later years and is indicative of the feelings stirred up by Cobbold's book (see also LL. 9, 12).

A strong belief has arisen, both in Australia and England, that the person whose History is related to Mr Cobbold [Margaret Catchpole] under that designation (and I suppose that there can be no doubt that was her real name) is now a rich widow named Reiby at Sydney. I think you expressed such an opinion to me yourself and yet Mr Cobbold ends the History of Mar. Catchpole by giving the date of her death. M^r. Reiby is exceedingly grieved and annoyed at this opinion, & has commissioned the Bishop of Tasmania to use his best endeavours to contradict it, officially, and upon clear documents, and he wishes to be placed in communication with M^r. Cobbold.

In the mean time he placed in my hands yesterday the enclosed Paper, by which it appears that M^r. Reiby's name was Mary or Molly Haydock (a Lancashire woman) & even if the

Official registers be disputed, a strong proof she cannot be Margaret Catchpole is that she has two grandsons clergymen, one of whom the Bishop ordained. Margaret though old [enough] to have had grown up grandsons, did not marry, according to the History, till towards the year 1810, when she was near 40—so the thing is impossible.

Yet there are extraordinary points of coincidence, which render the mistake very natural, & there are also some mysterious points which I should be glad to see cleared up—Mary Haydock was transported for Horse stealing, a very rare offence for a woman to commit, and she probably committed it from the same motive as Margaret. You will see by the dates she was only 14. She tells the Bishop she was of a respectable family, which is corroborated by her parents being married by Licence.—that she was at Boarding School, & ran off in the night for a frolic with a pony in a neighbouring field, without any intention of stealing it. The Bishop said he could not cross question the old Lady too severely, but he suspects it was a love affair & that she took the pony to run away. That there were some very strong extenuating circumstances, he truly remarks, is proved by the sentence of only seven years, when the Punishment at that time was Death.—It is a painful circumstance for M'. Cobbold to have been the cause of reviving this long forgotten misfortune, and involving a wealthy & highly respectable family in so much mortification.

You may remember that you told me that some other M'. Cobbold had met Mrs Innes, ye daughter of Mrs Reiby, & told her he had formerly known her mother, & on eagerly asking her name, replied ‘Oh, no that cannot be, for her name is Mary.’ This is quite natural. She probably did not know her mother’s maiden name, & had found out that there was a cloud on her early history, but knew her name was Mary, because she signed it so.

The mystery I allude to is the name of *Reiby*, or *Raby*, as I should have spelt it—While at Mr R — E's—we drove through Levington, on the Orwell [Suffolk] and they told me *there* is a mill which belonged to Raby, John Burry’s father, as he is called in the Book. I remarked to the Bishop that the word *Raby* was an anagram of *Burry*, and a great deal too like to conceal the real one, and he said I had discovered the enigma, and this was the great cause of the mistake—but it does not satisfy me, because I heard in the neighbourhood that Raby was the real name of Margaret’s lover & husband. Thomas you see is the name of the real M'. Reiby.

If you can give any authentic information to the Bishop of Tasmania,* he will be much obliged to you, & it may save his time, but he seems determined to unravel the mystery, & to see M'. Cobbold, if necessary before leaving England, as he promised to do so, and he feels great friendship & interest for the two clerical grandsons, who are settled in Van Dieman’s Land. Was the gentleman who bid for Kentrose Hall really call’d Reiby? That was a circumstance M'. Cobbold ought not to have mentioned if he *had* been Margaret’s son, and if was not, he has given ground in his book for this unpleasant mistake.

To be sure, as poor M'. Reiby did take the Horse, she might well, it may be said, be so interesting a heroine, but she seems to have belonged to a higher class, which is a point peoples Vanity clings to, and the great misfortune is that her descendants, now moving in the most respectable station are deeply annoyed and mortified by so unpleasant a publicity, an annoyance still more grating from its being founded on a mistake. It seems highly impossible Mr Cobbold should not know Margaret’s married name, and it seems now that he is bound to mention it to the parties concerned.

* The Bishop of Tasmania, Dr Nixon, went to England about 1848.

I remember you told me you had yourself seen Mrs Reiby at Sydney I read a letter from her about a servant, but I suppose it is only since the appearance of the Book that you imagined, like others, that she was Margaret Catchpole.

1847 March.

Source: Transcript of letter found between the pages of Mary Reibey's diary, and now in the Mitchell Library (A1508, Catchpole file).



89 *Lady Gipps Tries to Set the Record Straight*

Lady Gipps remains elusive. Lady Franklin, on her visit to the Gipps in 1839, saw her as prone to avoid the tedium of her official position by a suggestion of ill-health and said that she appeared older than her age. This contrasts sharply with another picture of her riding fast about the streets of the town. Mrs Lowe saw her as extremely intelligent and discerning, a social arbiter. The following letter to Colonial Secretary Edward Deas Thomson shows her in the familiar role of ex-Governor's wife, interested in the colony's affairs and anxious to protect her husband's memory against any rumour or aspersion that might smirch it. It was written soon after Gipps's death.

The Friars, Canterbury
March 29th 1847.

Dear M^r. Deas Thomson

Most probably before you get this letter the sad intelligence will have reached you that the Friend with whom you were so intimately associated for so long a period is no more—although I had been overwhelmed with anxiety during our voyage, and when we first landed in England, he had been to all appearances so much better latterly, that his sudden removal at last was so unlooked for by me as it was bitter. I have scarcely been equal to any exertion but I intended to make an effort to write to you as one of his particular Friends and correspondents in N.S. Wales—and I am the more anxious to do so now in consequence of a very extraordinary statement in a letter from Mr Parker to him and which had he seen I feel sure he would have been desirous to have cleared up. Mr Parker mentions 'that you were under the impression that Sir George had spoken unfavourably of you in some communication to Downing Street, and that Sir Charles Fitzroy had been told by M^r. Gairdner that he would not find such a set of officers in Sydney as he had in Antigua and that in Sir George's opinion there was not one of them competent to do more than write a dinner invitation'—Knowing the estimation in which he had you and indeed I may say the other officers of the Government, I feel a positive conviction that there was no truth or foundation

for this, and I well know that Sir George never entertained such an opinion, his brother (the Rev.^d Henry Gipps) happened to be here when I received this letter, and when I told him of it he offered to see M'. Gairdner and I enclose the part of his letter to me which relates to this subject and which I trust will be satisfactory to you. You had indeed a warm friend in him, and he had been particularly anxious about some inquiry that he promised to make for you, and he was greatly annoyed (because he said he thought your interest was concerned) that his Doctor prevented his going to the public offices respecting it when he was first in London.

I hope I am not wrong to enter into this explanation—*he* never approved of my interfering in anything relating to official matters, and I have no one to advise me, but I think it due to him and to you to correct such a false statement.—I shall send a copy of that part of M'. Gipps's letter to M'. Parker.

Pray give my affectionate love to Mrs Deas Thomson—I am sure she will grieve for me, and she will know how wretched I am—My dear Boy is with me and tries all in his power to comfort me, but he has had such a loss that if possible I feel more for him than for myself—

I hope all your children are well and that they will not forget me—Believe me

dear M'. Deas Thomson

Yours most Sincerely

Eliz.. th Gipps.

1847

Source: Deas Thomson Papers (MS. A1531-3, ML), vol. 3, pp. 146-51.



90 *Mrs Ann Baker to Eliza Camfield in England and Maria Windeyer to her Son Willie in Sydney*

The Camfield women left their mark on Australia. Matilda as the wife of William Henty in Tasmania and Western Australia; Ann Baker, who helped her sister, Maria Windeyer, in the struggle to keep Tomago (which the family pronounced Tōm-är gó) her property near Port Stephens. Another sister joined Maria later, at Tomago, when times were a little easier.

In some ways Ann had the hardest destiny, in so far as her hopes and fears centred round her son, Ashford, who may have been a genuine invalid, or possibly over-protected and indecisive. The idea of the Infirmary seems a strange one in any case, considering the family's standing.

Maria is a figure fully in the round, who comes clear and strong through her letters. Her declaration to her father (now amongst the family papers) presents the rock on which her life was built:

I never felt cast down even when my worldly prospects seemed most low, God put into my heart such trustfulness I never feared but I should have a substance, and I have now much more than I could at all expect or ask for.

But the Roman mother becomes more endearing through her small domestic touches, especially her interest in food. Before the hard times came, while in 1844 the family was still living in Elizabeth Street, she kept house with all the country appurtenances. Her letter is worth quoting:

Having just gobbled up two Custards I must note what you say about Custard Compound, what will they invent next? eggs are cheap here & I keep Hens & have I ever told you about my Cow the joy of our household & the envy of my neighbours we all but thrive in custard, then I make whipped cream which is extolled all over the town, a dish of it is on the table now, it is a kind of thing we call Italian cream at home, beat up with sugar till it will bear a spoon & then flavoured with Lemons or Brandy.



Maria (Mrs Richard) Windeyer, post-1847, unsigned and undated. Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

My cow who is known by the name of Tea Pot has not been out of the yard since she arrived from Tomago . . . is very wild & bolts at me every morning till I give her some potatoes, all our animals you must understand are great pets . . .

My dear Eliza

Tomago, Dec^r 9th 1847

I am not only negligent in writing but also I forget when I wrote last, however you will not I dear say grumble at my writing too often at least I flatter myself so, and as I wish to send the enclosed note to Mrs Towse and do not know her address I must request you to direct and send it for me, how are you and our dear Father, well, I hope, you will have heard no doubt before this reaches you that Mr Windeyer has been so ill as to be obliged to take a voyage to Launceston that he may be out of the way of all business, Maria accompanied him, we hear he is something better—poor Ashford is very weak and complaining of constant pain in his back, which I fear, and he is *positive*, is growing crooked. Many people now say as I all along have [said] that he ought to have had entire rest for it last year instead of toiling about in this heat when he was so weak—he was able to move about and go a walking pace, when his uncle was here two months ago, who being out of temper one day told him it was a want of exertion that made him so infirm, at the same time told the poor fellow he never would be well again, in so abrupt a way that his spirits have sunk ever since the less he did exert himself and for some time I really thought he was the better for it, but alas he now is never free from pain he feels and looks so thin I fear for the consequences he has taken a great desire to get into the Sydney Infirmary, as he there would be under constant medical superintendence, and as there is a gentleman here now to direct the business [of the family business at Tomago] we have applied to know if he can be admitted, as the ship is sailing to England in three days I cannot wait the reply to our application before I send this off, I dread his going from me for should he be seriously ill there I should not have the means to go to him, he has about 30 L, but that would not last him long if he has to board himself there, as there will be many little extra expenses, may God of his infinite Goodness restore him to health or I know not how he is to obtain a maintenance, at present I am greatly occupied, having (besides my anxiety for him and Maria) 2 gentlemen in the house and no female servant, I have their Sydney man to cook and do kitchen work, but I can but just manage to get through my housemaid work and other matters before our 1 o'clock dinner, though I always rise at six or before. Nanny [her daughter Ann] helps and feeds the poultry and rabbits, I thank God she has recovered from the influenza which has been very prevalent. I was alarmed about her for she had an eruption with it very much the same as her Fathers, it has all disappeared except a spot in her head. I have been in very good health but the heat is very trying—yesterday we heard of a frightful accident at Sydney, the governor was just starting to go to a wedding when the horses bolted and overturned the carriage, Lady Mary Fitzroy and the aid-de-camp were both killed, Sir Charles was not much hurt, but what a dreadful shock it must be to him.

We were surprised at not hearing from Camfield, God grant all is well with him. Ashford has often talked of writing to him but has not spirit for it—Ashford got a letter from Mrs Henry Camfield lately, they are all well, Henry is appointed Collector of Revenue and resident magistrate at Albany, King's Sound where they now reside. Mine is a dull letter, dearest, I trust the next may be more cheerful, Ashford and Ann join with me in kindest love to their grandfather and to you and believe me

Ever your affectionate sister

A.E. Baker

We expect Willie next week to spend his Christmas holidays here. [Some words undecipherable.] I have just been down in the garden and found a bunch of Bananas—I think they are good. Oates will probably be with you on Thursday

Tomago
Aug 2d 1851

My dear Willie,

I did not receive your letter till Thursday—I was quite in a fidget, I see you posted it on the 27th, there is some mismanagement at the Sydney post office. I only today received an acknowledgement from the Bank of the money I sent last week. I hope you find yourself comfortable, I am sure Mr Shelley will prove a great acquisition in every respect. Do not be disheartened, dearest, though you do find the Boys different to what you wish, a reformation cannot be effected in a hurry, do you keep on in the even tenour of your way, not daunted by their opposition, a courageous calmness will do more than many words. You have a noble [? aim] & if your example does good but to a few it is worth achieving [almost indecipherable.] You speak of Capt —— certainly I think you should call on him if he asks you, being David Mitchell's uncle as if he has heard of you from him & I think David's friendship is worth retaining, the Mitchells have always shown a partiality towards you: I will pay Chisholm's bill now by Oates who will probably put this in the post, he is to take your Books & if I had a convenient package I suppose I may put in a cake I have just made you would be affronted now at a Bacon Cheek? Alas, there is no more Roe, I tried to get some last week. I am glad you take exercise, it is so very healthy I see by today's paper the Shamrock is returned, I have no letter, nor do I think your Aunt has, as I heard from her today, it is very strange, I shall write again immediately, your aunt's money would be so acceptable to her & if I had my few hundreds I could invest it now to advantage, as when the news of the gold gets home, so many will be coming out, and land will be rising in value, I have some notion whether I should not buy back that section called Becketter, there are 2 or 3 little farms on it & a good run for cattle, what think you? I think I may now buy; Oates is quite prepared to take the vineyard at £100 for 4 years commencing at Mich³ I will have a regular agreement drawn out & every article particularized. I shall keep Jiggins to keep the garden, the fences, & make general improvements, & Dick is come back, he will milk & help with the dairy which of itself will pay the expenses of the man, the Boy & a woman servant. I think on the whole the arrangement a good one, it will save me much fatigue and anxiety & surely put more money in my pocket, that is, if Oates succeeds in selling his Wine, I going to let him have 300 gs to begin with, to be returned at the end of the Lease or before.

I hope you have received your Coat from Chisholm's you must really want it, the other is too cold, if Oates brings up the Box & you can spare it, you may return it as it will do to send again: the loquots are only getting ripe I have watched them very eagerly but only see about half a dozen fit to gather. One of the cakes I thought you might perhaps like to take to Mr Shelley, since it is made of some of those nice eggs he so admired, we call it a sponge cake.

Sunday Evening. I have thought of thee very much this day, my dear child but then what day is there I do not think on thee but on this holy day I fancy you think more of Mother, perhaps too you knelt at God's altar & asked a blessing on me? truly He doth bless me in thee, my dear affectionate son. As there is no letter from you today and Jim had the pony though of course I should not send him as he does not look too well but soon will put on a

little flesh, I had your old fellow up to look at yesterday, he is a picture, round as a barrel, Dick says 'he hasn't no withers'—he is all straight from neck to tail, his lameness is better. As Jim *will be at the Bank* Mr Forrest can hand in my cheque I shall desire Oates to put them in the post, the Box he will bring himself in the middle of the week which will defray the freight, he expects to do a little business at Parramatta either in wine or vinegar. Grant has just been there, he was in the Cellar & says we beat all the wine makers in this part. He is perfectly astonished at our last year's wine, they have nothing to compare with it, this is very consoling to Oates, now I must go and see what I can find in the house for the Box, may Heaven guard my dear Boy for ever,

your affectionate mother,
Maria Windeyer

Source: Camfield and Windeyer Papers (MS D30, ML).



91 *A Garden Enclosed: Dame Magdalen Le Clerc and Dame M. Scholastica Gregory to their Mother Superior in England*

Members of the Roman Catholic Church, convicts and free persons alike, suffered rigid religious discrimination in N.S.W. The priests who had offered to accompany the First Fleet had put forward good reasons why the prisoners should have clergymen of their faith, but had not received even a rejection of their offer; instead, Catholic prisoners had been forced to attend Protestant services, and probably the number of *de facto* relationships and 'bastard' children was partly a result of their reluctance to accept Protestant marriage and baptism, which for them was a sin. The rebels sent from Ireland carried on the struggle, which assumed a new and, to the Anglican clergy, a more sinister phase under the tolerant rule of Governor Bourke. A sensible Catholic wife of a Protestant solicitor, Lucinda Chalmers, summed up the state of affairs to the beloved but turbulent Father Therry (Therry Papers).

Extracts

[? 14th Sept 1839.]

We are in a sad state of war in Sydney; we are cruelly persecuted, I mean the Catholics; Mr Chambers is in every paper now attacked and abused; they suspect he has become a Catholic, and together with defending the Reverent Mr Brady has enraged the opposition part that there is no bounds to their scurrity.

Feeling was close to boiling point—the meeting of the two prelates, Bishop and Cardinal Broughton and Polding, in Bourke's drawing room

(recorded in Clark, *History of Australia* vol. II) was dramatic to a degree, and in 1848 the struggle entered yet another stage, when Cardinal Bishop Polding, himself a Benedictine, introduced nuns of his order from a convent in Sussex to work with Catholic women and to open schools. There was flame behind the smoke; the conversion of the two clergymen, Sconce and Makinson, who were however already closely associated with Newman, sent a fresh wave of alarm through the threatened Protestant Establishment. The gentle version of so much vituperation is a refreshing sidelight on the whole matter.

The nuns were first housed in the grounds of the school-seminary Polding established. Then they were transferred to the Vineyard, bought from Hannibal Macarthur and renamed Subiaco. This remained an enclosed order till sold and demolished in the 1960s.

Dame Magdalen to her former superior:

Extracts

26th July 1848

Our sojourn in this abode of holiness and peace has not, I trust, been wholly unprofitable either to ourselves or others. I have many under instruction, particularly old women who cannot read; among the rest, a family—husband, wife, and children—who will in a few weeks be received into the Catholic Church. I sometimes tell His Grace, in a joke, that there had better be a cell erected for me somewhere in the precincts of the monastery, where I might live as a Hermitess, and spend my time in prayer and instructing the old women and children, for though so many are employed in that holy work, there is still enough for more to assist. I should indeed be happy to devote the remaining portion of my life in so delightful a task; but I suppose I must not expect quite so snug a berth.

She goes on to describe the progress of the church, the conversions and professions, and anticipates the consecration of a bishop. No wonder heads of other churches were alarmed.

In August another of the sisters wrote to her former convent, Dame M. Scholastica Gregory's letter gives grounds for the alarm felt by Broughton and Lang.

22nd March 1848

. . . the newspapers I sent you would give you some idea of the stir religion is making in and about Sydney; almost daily new converts to the Church; upwards of 50 have been received since our arrival in this Colony,—among others two Puseyite clergymen with their wives and families, and several others are about to follow their example. They were clever men and were very high in their Church; they were totally dependent on their livings, so that their Protestant friends think them crazy in thus acting; but a kind Providence did not suffer them long to want means of support. His Grace has given each of them a situation in the *university* which will comfortably support them.* They are very amiable people. We have been introduced to them. You will see their names in the papers very often—Sconce and Makinson,

* 'The university' presumably means St Mary's Seminary established in the Cardinal's grounds.

friends, I believe, of Archdeacon Manning. They have each a nice family, all of whom will be confided to our care when we are ready to receive them . . .

His Grace has at length decided upon a house for our temporary convent; it is situated about 4 miles from Sydney. It is a beautiful place, bounded on one side by the ocean, and on the other by the bush; but we shall not be in any danger, for we are to have some good dogs and two laybrothers on the premises . . .

In February 1849 Dame Magdalen wrote from Subiaco.

. . . The house in which his Grace has placed us is very commodious: the rooms lofty and pleasant; it is surrounded by a magnificent verandah, supported on one side by noble stone pillars! this is a great luxury in a warm climate like this. We have for the present a very pretty chapel formed of the largest room in the house; it is nearly the size of our dear choir at beloved old Salford.* The greatest misery is so much candle light; it is always dark enough for artificial light at 8 o'clock, so that we shall never be able to say Matins without candles; this is owing to the want of twilight.

The house is situated on the banks of a large river, which gives us the benefit of sea-breezes as the tide comes in morning and evening. A large steamer passes twice a day from Parramatta to Sydney, which is very convenient, and we ourselves keep two or three boats—one to row persons from the other side of the river who want to come to the Convent; so you can see unless we think proper to send for them they cannot come from that side at least. I do not suppose we shall be much troubled with visitors, for our rules of Enclosure are very strict. Our boundaries are very extensive; and within them are many rural and romantic spots. The garden is spacious and beautifully laid out, though at present it does not contain much, having been long neglected. There are, however, vines, peach trees, mulberries, orange, etc., in abundance. There is a sort of grotto formed of olive trees, and plenty of walks . . . there is a hedge of sweet briar. The garden is some distance from the house, but near it there are shrubberies, a lawn, and down by the river side, plantations formed by nature . . . At present the house is more than large enough, but as we increase, and especially when we begin our school, it will be necessary to add another storey . . . It really might have been built for us (as no doubt it was in the views of Divine Providence), and the situation could not be better calculated for a Convent, so quiet and retired and completely cut off from all intruders . . .

Of their future pupils:

I am told the children here are very indolent indeed; to tell the truth, independence being the spirit of this land, there are no *children*; a child of 10 years of age is like one of 14 at home; and to see their *consequence*—it is quite laughable—as they strut about the streets. We must try to bring down their spirits a little when we get them under our tuition. Till we open a school, our chief employment will be in making vestments, which will bring in a small income.

* Salford was the Benedictine nuns' Mother House in England.



92 *The death of Mrs Broughton Shows Eleanor Stephen (née Bedford) as Matron*

When news reached Mrs Broughton that the recently bereaved Alfred Stephen had offered his heart, home and seven surviving orphaned children to Eleanor, the sensible daughter of the Reverend William Bedford in Hobart, she assured him of the bride-to-be's good sense and fitness for a difficult role. This letter to her brother, when Eleanor had added her own quota of eight more to the family, shows her as the model Victorian matron. It is only natural that she should have written so powerfully to depict a harrowing death scene, for poor Mrs Broughton had not found the role of Anglican bishop's wife easy. She was believed to have confided once that she had been better pleased with her earlier position as a simple parish priest's wife. One can see her point of view.

21st. September 1848

My dear William

I see the 'Nautilus' is to sail for Launceston tomorrow, and I therefore take advantage of the opportunity of letting you know that Mary's little box that was to have come by the 'Shamrock' made its appearance two days ago. It arrived by the 'Nautilus' and remained on board nearly a fortnight waiting to be sent for, for of course as I had no idea of its coming by that vessel it never entered my head to send for it. However the day before yesterday the captain sent it up and we had the pleasure of receiving our pretty presents. I will write to Mary and Missey by the next 'Shamrock'—in the mean time give our best love to them both with many thanks for their kindness. We all admire very much our respective gifts.

We are all well—but I have a piece of news to communicate which you will be sorry to hear; and which will grieve my dear Father and Mother. I allude to the death of poor dear Mrs Broughton; which took place on Sunday night last the 16th instant. You may have heard of the dangerous illness of the Bishop, whose recovery for many days was scarcely expected. Poor Mrs Broughton was his constant nurse and attendant until she was taken ill something in the same way on the Tuesday. On the Thursday Erysipelas in the face made its appearance. On Friday Evening she became insensible—and continued so until she gently expired on Sunday night. The poor Bishop all this time [was] confined to his bed—When first he was told of his wife's dangerous state, his distress was extreme. Since then he has been more calm and composed—The funeral took place yesterday morning, and was most numerously attended. Ourselves, and several other families, have put on mourning, which we shall wear about six weeks. I can hardly tell you how grieved I am at this death. Poor Mrs Broughton's loss will be long felt in our society. She was universally loved and respected and to ourselves she was always most kind and friendly—There are no fears entertained for the Bishop's health just now—but he is still very weak and confined to his bed. Both his daughters are with him—

This has been, and is, the most sickly season I have known in Sydney. The Erysipelas, and some affection of the throat accompanying the Influenza have carried off several. I wish you to send this letter bodily to my Father, or Mother, or Edward, as you may think best. I think it better not to frighten them in the first instance with a black seal I shall write again by the next 'Shamrock'—I hope you are all well.

Poor Mrs Broughton was sixty-six years of age. The Bishop is three years younger. We all unite in best love to all the Bedfords at Campbell Town—and Believe me to be—Ever

my dear William
Your affectionate sister
Eleanor.

Source: Bedford Family Papers, 1821–61 (MS. A4482, ML). p. 91.



93 *News from an Overlander*

This is not, in the strict sense, a letter to any known recipient. It is from a woman little skilled in expressing herself on paper, but so much under stress of pain and exhaustion that she had to talk to somebody. It is communication at its most stark and imperative. We know little of her past or her later life, but her voice might well be, in our own time, that of any female refugee struggling towards a new, uncertain home.

Extract from a diary of Mrs John Gilbert, unfinished and undated:

Sunday 21 lave [leave] the sheep stachen that is at the River Marry [Murray] Com about 2 mills verry larg Clift [cliff?] Round the River and a sharp pint [point] verry sandy and ills Come to a salt Crick Go on a littel found a littel warter hole and see some Billey Bungs [billabongs] Come 12 mills.

Monday 22 Go on for anCoc [Handcocks?] Come to a hute a mill this side of Ancocks Come to a salt Crick Verry Hev [heavy?] Road still scrub Come 12 mills Thursday [Tuesday?] 23 stops here to day Lost 2 of the Bullucks fund 1 of them Whensday 24 not found Clemens Bulluck Come to Fowlers stormy Eat all the flower Come 1 mill ½ looking lick [like] Rain Rain a littel Got 50 lbs of Flower here Thursday 25 at Fowlers Rain all night Rain this morning Bullucks Gone found them Go on 10 mills Past tow [2?] Leaks [lakes] Come to a Crick to Camp verry Dirty Rain in narly all day verry scrub sume sand Hill to night was Confind Son Thursday 25 of May at the Crick Friday 26 stoping at the Crick not Rain this morning Clouds Rain to [too] nerly all Day

Saday [Saturday] 27 stopping at the Crick and [?]

Sunday 28 stopping at the Crick that my yangis [youngest] Son was Born 25 of May 1848 Monday 29 Lave [leave] the Crick Arfter my Confinment to go scrub 15 mills to Leak Bonny Come to 15 mills not thre the scrub Chasin the Bulluck up all night this is my first Days travel after my Confinment no Warter here Rain when Come is only [?] Rain all night Thursday [Tuesday] 30 Lave the scrub Come to Lake Bonny in 4 mills atop at the peak verry Winde and stormy this is at Mr Chambers stachen about 3 mills Down a Crick my Dear and gessay is Gone to see if they Can get any Flowr no not any the Poor man as not [got?] any

no not a damper verry Cold and Winde But fine this after noon a Poor Place no shugar Feed a no damper Flowr

Whensday 31 Lave Leak Bonny and go over Lander Corner at the marry River verry [?] Road 4 mills malley and salt Bush and pine 2 Black [?]

Thursday 1 June leav the over Lander Corner and Come to Wigens Pound 4 mills Plenty malles and salt Bush and Furs Past a Billy Bung Black [?] Good fead for the Bulluck my Dear got some Flower Given to him about 30 lb

Friday 2 stopping at Wigens today to spell the Bullucks Blacks camping here Burnt the Back [Black?] fellows finger

Saday 3 leav Wigens Pound not leav to day lost Billey the Bulluck my Dear and Games [James] track a Bulluck but not him meet Goe [Joe] Come to Wigens Pound goe lent us 85 lb of Flower

Sunday 4 stop at Wigens Pound Monday 5 this morning leave Wigleys Pound and goe with us verry find [fine?] this morning Go 7 mills to Devlins Pound Thursday [Tuesday] 6 leve Davlins Pound this morning Pretty Good Road to day sand and malley fine cliffs to be seeⁿ Come 8 mills to Yarreis flats Whensday 7 leve yarreis flats some Evey [heavy?] Road to day verry sandy and hills Pine and malley salt Bush Cliffs to Bee seen scotts stachen Basket and Chambres Drays are pasing here this

Source: Fragment, unfinished and undated, in State Library of South Australia.



94 *A Refugee from the Germany of 1848 Describes Australia to her Relatives at Home*

Early in 1849 the *Beulab* brought 170 Germans,* mostly from the Rhine, to settle as migrants. They were welcomed by the Catholic Bishop, Polding, and put in the care of a government employee who spoke their language and who visited them to check their conditions. A collection of their letters shows their general appreciation. 'Here you cannot tell the master from the servant,' one man wrote. His wife, Maria Eva Schubach, added details. Writing from the property of Henry Carmichael, Porphyry Point, Hunter's River, on 24 June 1849, she told her parents, brothers and sisters:

The Good Lord has not yet left us. He has led us upon a good path and we thank God daily for it. Oh, I would like to be with you for only an hour to tell you of everything, but I do not want to return to Germany. I wish you were all here with me, you would be exempted

* The Macarthur had brought out the earliest group of German refugees, as wine-growers. They too were happy in New South Wales, as they told their fellow German national, the Polish explorer Strzelecki.

from your drudgery. It is indeed a far voyage, and a difficult one for people with small children; but for those who have no children yet, it is a pleasure trip. We live now in a country where there is still peace, where one can live without sorrow or care. One does not fret, when the end of the week approaches and there is no more money for buying food, how one will last out the week. That we need not do, dear father, we have no worries. Even if it rains for a whole week so that our men cannot do much work, our provisions and wages continue.

Our Nannchen and Kaetchen have been going to school for 6 weeks now and we pay 12 shillings and fourpence for the two children. This is our biggest expence. But they must learn English and they are both learning it well.

Dear sister Katharina, and my dear sister Christina, my promise to make a code mark in my letter to indicate that we are well is quite laughable in Australia; that I am well I can write to you as openly as I can that you are my sisters . . .

Do not forget to purchase the Little Englishman and study it diligently aboard ship. We learnt no English on the ship because we were too many Germans, and that was not good for us. We learnt more on our trip inland than we did in 4 months on the ship, and now we know quite a bit through our children, who are learning diligently at school.

Source: George Nadel, 'Letters from German Refugees', RAHS *J.&P.*, vol 39, p. 264.



95 *The Non-Flickering Lamp:* *Elizabeth Macarthur to Edward*

In one of his depressive-phase letters, John Macarthur had told a friend of writing by the light of a flickering lamp—which could have been a symbolic representation of his state of mind. Now, almost blind, within a few weeks of her death, his widow was still writing clear and courageous accounts of public events, of family affairs and her own state of mind to that reliable and affectionate pillar of the family, Edward. She had been almost sixty years in the colony, had seen the beginning and end of one phase, and lived into the beginning of another, and the lamp that had burned so brightly and flickered so disastrously in her husband was still steady in her—not in her failing body and quavering, almost unmanageable hand, but in her undimmed spirit. It is a remarkable letter for a woman of eighty-two, for her mind was as clear as ever. In contrast, the slightly sickly effusion of her daughter depicting her as the beloved invalid seems the language of a different mental world (L. 96).

In August she had told Edward of an attack of crysipelas which had kept her from the consecration of the Camden church. The illness had left her in 'my usual state of health, but of course more enfeebled'. In December she was writing again.



Elizabeth (Mrs John) Macarthur in old age, watercolour by William Nicholas.
Courtesy of Mr Stanham of Camden Park.

Parramatta December 9th 1849

My dearest Edward

Since writing to you by a ship which sailed for London on the 26th of November, I have had the very great pleasure to receive a letter from you dated August 3rd and have to thank you for it, and also for three numbers of the 'Dublin Evening Mail' which I have just now finished reading with much interest, the details of Her Majesty's visit, is very gratifying—it must have been so for herself—such a warm hearted welcome, and such a variety of

testimonials of gladness, as were exhibited to greet her—must leave a very pleasant impression on her mind—and we hope future good will arise from this visit—

My last letter was rather a brief one, I told you that I had scarcely recovered from an attack of Influenza, we had all been ill, thanks be to the Almighty, we are all pretty well recovered Emmeline still suffering a little—the weather has been more changeable than I think I ever remember it to have been or at least I fancy so—I observe your friends Lord & Lady Fanshaw were among the Elite paying their respects to Majesty—I have seen a description of Lady Fanshaw's dress at the Drawing Room—Irish poplin and [?] jabonets will now be the ruling fashion—We were somewhat surprised at the sudden breaking up of the Australian Co. affairs,* and at the present only know the system of management is to be changed, and economized—I fear Cap^o King may suffer from loss of income—all his sons are at present well established in different parts of the country—Philip the eldest who married his cousin Elizabeth is the only one holding an appointment in the Company—There is a rumour in Sydney that Cap^o King has been offered some other appointment.

I fear with you that Sir T. Brisbane will feel mortification at the deficiency of the late Ed. Dunlop† who had charge of the Observatory at Parramatta—he was not equal to the undertaking I believe and moreover was addicted to [word undecipherable] Lady Brisbane will be sorry to hear that his widow is little other than a cripple from rheumatic affections—I was glad to hear that Sir Thomas was less a sufferer from rheumatism since his residence at Brisbane—The Presbyterian minister mentioned by Lady B in her letter to you is a very great favourite and his discourses bring crowded audiences to the Scots Churches, where he preaches, which is generally in Sydney—I have little to tell you of ourselves, I had letters from Camden a day or two since, they had Cap^o Erskine who commands Her Majesty's Ship Havannah, on a visit of several days [they] are much pleased with him. I think I understand he met you several years ago, at Mr Speer's in Scotland—the youngest son of Sir Charles Fitzroy has the appointment of Lieut. on board of her—and a young Norman a midi—a cousin of Hermans—is also in the ship. He has had two or three trips to Camden—very kind of you to notice the young Ensign—I anticipate or should I rather say I participate in the pleasure he will have in carrying the colours of the 57th before her Majesty—this young man promises well—he must have been diligent in his studies—I believe there is prospect of a good harvest in general and there is plenty of grass and a good deal of hay has been made.

She goes on to describe the fate of the Kennedy expedition, touches on Leichhardt's perils, and ends:

I have written to the end of my paper which tired my fingers and eyes—therefore I shall only briefly add my love with every good wish to you, my dearest Edward.

It was a fitting conclusion. She died in February 1850.

* The Macarthur's had been active in the work of the Australian Agricultural Company, the headquarters of which were at Tahlee and then Stroud. Phillip Parker King was in charge of the Company when it was wound up.

† The Ed. Dunlop mentioned had been brought out by Brisbane.



**96 *Mrs Henry (later Lady) Parker,
to her Brother Edward***

In her August letter to her eldest son, Elizabeth Macarthur had referred gratefully to the good nursing care she had received. This had been at the hands of her youngest daughter, Emmeline, who had grown into the rather self-consequential young wife of the Governor's secretary. Born a few months after the Rum Rebellion, she scarcely knew her eldest brother (John, junior, she never saw) and her girlhood was shadowed by the deepening gloom of her father's later years. Her occasional asperity and her enjoyment of the role of bereaved daughter can be forgiven, though so different in tone from her mother's serene common sense.

A few extracts present her before marriage.

[1829]

. . . We visit nowhere—& of your old acquaintances I can give very little account—Mr Balcombe & Mrs Abell accompanied by Capt. Ovens & the usual train of daughters (5 or 6 in number) paid us a visit . . .

Emmeline could not be of the party because the provoking Mrs Abell had a little daughter suffering from whooping cough and Mrs Macarthur feared infection for her daughter.

Mr Balcombe was ill . . . so that his fair daughter has been obliged to confine herself to the house a little more—he is not well and I believe the opinion of the medical men is that he will never perfectly recover his health . . .

The Darlings had been attentive.

. . . but my Father has been too ill during the stay up here to permit of our giving any parties, and therefore our communications have been confined to note-writing—book lending etc . . . we see Mrs Lethbridge frequently & she is a great favourite with us all—I think her a very amiable little woman and she is a great acquisition to us . . .

In October 1831, Emmeline let herself go about the loss of the brother she had never seen to the brother she had only met as an adult. Her death-letter style was already well developed:

. . . the noble fortitude you have displayed under the awful calamity with which it pleased the Almighty to visit us—the touching attention you have shown to the feelings of others while your own affectionate heart must have been bursting with the fullness of its own sorrows, have set me an example of resignation and true piety from which I hope to profit in after years . . .

The letter she wrote after her mother's death in 1850 presents the model of the properly delicate, bereaved Victorian lady:

A letter from my dear Husband, will have informed you of the mournful event, which has deprived us of our dearly beloved mother. I could not in those sad moments write to you myself, but now that the feelings are more tranquillised, I am naturally anxious to have a direct communication with you. I believe that every particular of the sad occurrence, has been forwarded to you by one, or another, of the family; and I do not wish to dwell unavailingly upon my own peculiar sorrow—every day renders me more sensible of the extent of my loss, and of that blank which no time can ever supply—To you also, my beloved Brother, the bereavement is a heavy one; but I am sure it will be a consolation to you to feel, that your constant attention to our blessed Parent, added much to the happiness of her declining years—James will have informed you, that he came here a few days since, for the purpose of opening our beloved Mother's Will—I could not myself be present, but my dear Husband acted for me, and from him I learn the contents of the whole of the papers; and as James said he intended to send you Copies of them, and as I am unequal to enter upon such a subject myself, my Husband will, at my request, mention a few points which occurred to him upon the perusal of them—We shall of course be anxious to know, what your future plans and wishes may be. In the meantime however—at the close of our usual sojourn here, we propose to return to Parramatta: and I need not assure you, that with one sad exception, Everything shall go on with the same care and attention, as though the beloved object of our exertions, were still present to gladden us with her approval.—You will be glad to hear that my health has not suffered materially from the constant anxiety I have been subjected to:—the tender watchfulness of the best of Husbands, has done much to save me from suffering, and to his constant and unwearying devotion, I owe much of my present tranquility.

God bless you, my dearest Brother,
Ever your affect^{ly} attached Sister
E.E. Parker

Source: Parker Papers; Macarthur Papers, 1829–50.



97 Anne Hassall to her Son James

Anne Hassall had married young, and when this letter was written was still only in early middle age, settled calmly at the hub of her circle of friends and relatives. She has dropped the long passages of exhortation which she addressed to her son in the early days of his ministry, and the letter deals with family affairs. There are glimpses of her sisters. Elizabeth, who has become the second wife of her father's successor at Parramatta, comes over as slightly grim in attitude, in contrast to the almost saintly Mr Bobart, her husband. The household revolves round the deathbed of Mr Betts,

Mary's husband, and his attitude of resignation is most acceptable to the group, while Mary seems to have given way completely. This is the close-knit small Denbigh-Parramatta-Oxley world on the eve of the interrupted wedding festivities of the youngest of Anne's daughters, 'Mary Ann', (updated to the more fashionable Marianne) to Mr George Hope. The elder daughter, Catherine (Kate), has already been, for some time, the wife of the bridegroom's brother, Dr Robert Hope, and is settled with him in the Geelong district, where, while on a visit, Marianne met her future husband.



Anne (Mrs Thomas) Hassall, *née* Marsden, in middle age. Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

In February 1852 Mrs Hassall is giving the news to James, then still in his Berrima parish:

Extract

If you have received Eliza's letter sent last Friday, you and Fanny are fancying this is your sister's Wedding day—but you will be sorry to hear that through her severe illness we were compelled to postpone it. Marianne was taken ill the morning after we arrived in Parramatta and tho' I was able to get her home on Wednesday Evening the journey was too much for her and she had a relapse—but it would have been too inconvenient to your Aunt Elizabeth for us to remain there any longer—she is almost harassed off her legs and so is Mr Bobart—he sits up every night with John Betts and has his daily routine of business besides. Both Charley Betts and Sarah are in constant attendance upon their Father, they both of them look very ill and worn . . .

Betts' mind is very composed and he is quite resigned. [?] Jessica went to see him—he says he has forgiven everyone and [paper torn] he will be found on the right hand of Christ in the last great day. This has thrown a damp on Marianne's wedding—none of our Parramatta relations can come up for it, and we are obliged to keep it very quietly inviting nobody except Jessica and her husband—should Marianne be strong enough we intend it to take place on Thursday the 12th for your Aunt Mary has begged us to have it that it may if possible take place before your Uncle is no more.

Please excuse this hasty note but I thought you would be anxious to hear from Denbigh—we seem all in confusion and worried—we are all very sorry you cannot be with us for your own sake I am glad it is a long fatiguing journey—Marianne thanks you for your kind offer of Charley* it would have given her much pleasure to have paid you a visit if only for the purpose of introducing G.H.—I think we should like him very much in time—he is like the Dr but older in look and grave manners.

I hope Fanny† and darling Baby are well—you may bless both of them for me—accept the best love of your Ever Affectionate Mother

Anne Hassall

While we were at dinner today Charley Shelley came in to the great delight of his mother who is staying at Denbigh I brought her up with me when I came from Parramatta as Marianne was so sick I did not like to travel alone with her. Marianne is very much better today.

* 'Charley' was James's negro servant.

† Fanny, James's wife and a connection of Oxley's.

Source: Hassall Correspondence (MS. A1677⁴), pp. 576–9.



98 *Lady Forbes Tells James Macarthur of her Regrets over her 'Overdelicacy'*

Amelia Sophia Forbes was popular, especially with her husband's colleagues. Judge Dowling senior found her 'the most amiable enlightened and ladylike person I have ever met'; his son described her as 'a gracious lady'. Her book, *Memories of a Crown Colony*, is still pleasant reading.

But her place here is due to its importance in reminding us of the number of conscientious officials who died poor men, worn out by their service and leaving their widows and children in want (cf. L. 38). Forbes was offered £700 a year but died before he could draw it. She received the pension but only after long delay, and arrears were not paid. This long explanation comes from Parramatta, in November 1852.

My dear Sir

Your very kind note of 23 Oct.^r I have been unable to answer from illness—first a continuation of my severe headaches, and since relieved from them, an attack of the prevailing Influenza, I may truly say this is the first moment I have had the power of holding the pen or collecting my thoughts, and I trust this will sufficiently excuse a silence which would otherwise be unpardonable—entering as you have done so warmly into my interests and viewing my claim in its true light—I should be sorry to wound the feelings of any party by a comparison of merits but mine have been so grievously hurt by my dear husband's services being measured by the labour of those who only enjoyed what he had prepared, for them, that your expressions on this subject were balm to my troubled spirit—and the just tribute you pay to the memory of one so dear to me still more grateful to my heart—It would afford me much pleasure if I could have an opportunity of speaking to you on the merits of my claim & the supposed difficulty in bringing it forward—I am now residing in a small cottage near my sons at Parramatta but should your occupations prevent your paying me a visit I will briefly explain—why I have brought forward my claim—why I declined to do so when Lady Dowling made her application & received the consideration I now ask—and as much of the communication between Mr Deas Thomson and myself on the subject as may be necessary.

My bringing forward my claim at the present moment arose in this manner. Lady Dowling called on me to request I would aid her in her endeavours to obtain an increase of Pension—I thought this very unlikely but I wrote to Mr Thomson and stated that I should feel the memory of my husband insulted if I was overlooked and I took that opportunity of saying I regretted that when Lady Dowling established her right to receive her Pension retrospectively I had from over delicacy authorised him to prevent my name being coupled with hers on that occasion—Mrs Lowe had made some cruel coarse remarks which had deeply wounded my feelings not then blunted by time—and situated as I then was I did not need the assistance—my two dear sons contributed to my income and then I was living with Mrs Forbes Senr and Mrs George Forbes in the *aristocratic* residence impertinently commented on by Mrs Lowe—I may therefore have expressed myself as I then felt that I waived my claim though I did not really intend to shut myself out of what became my just right should I at any period require such aid—and as Mr Thomson in my name in Council declined the assistance for me I have embarrassed the Govt and prevented the sum £666—

being placed on the Estimates—Mr Thomson's notes to me have been most kind and I can expect nothing more than what the Governor in his minutes on my own note to Mr Thomson states—that if I bring it forward it can only be left an open question—but he adds he thinks I have been ill advised & that remarks may pass which would be unpleasant to hear—not exactly these words but their intimation—as taking ill advised, no-one advised me—discussing with Lady Dowling the improbability of her succeeding in the petition she wished to lay before the Council I was reminded of what I had lost from over delicacy—and as my circumstances and the circumstances of the Colony are wholly changed since the period when I shrank from discussing so painful a subject I thought myself without any impropriety might state my altered circumstances and ask if I could not obtain what I never imagined I should be compelled to claim—The Colony at the time when I declined this boon was an impoverished one but still a cheap one to live in and I had two sons who had no other claims on their industry and who liberally supplied me with all I needed—now the Colony is rich & the revenue so increased that it is able to pay all just demands while at the same time the price of every necessary of life so increased that my pension does not afford me such requisites I will not say luxuries as my age & ill health require—[Of] my sons too from whom I derived a portion of my subsistence, one I have lost, and the other married living on a small income with a family, & I could not permit him to make my situation more comfortable without feeling I was injuring his family, which would be quite sufficient to poison the relief afforded me—

With regards to any remark, what could be said (as you kindly & truly observed) 'otherwise than honorable to the memory of so able & distinguished a Public Functionary' as my dear husband—as for myself I have not importuned the Country or the People—my Pension was offered to me and although weighed in the same scale with others I thankfully accepted it—I certainly used such interest as I had to obtain a position for my son & it was not difficult in as much as Lord Grey knew my husband's claims, fully appreciated his services & on his retirement wrote the most flattering testimonial of his usefulness & ability in the discharge of his duties for the period of thirteen years, in the regret he expressed that ill health compelled him to resign & the Government to accept his resignation.—From Lord Grey a strong recommendation was forwarded to Sir Charles Fitzroy but even this was three years in abeyance—Surely this does not call for remark and as to my sons tis true they appeared to have much property at their disposal but I have a letter of my dear husbands to his mother after his arrival from England dated *Shellaton* where he was trying to struggle with the adverse times—which will explain their prospects: Oct 28 1839 'On my arrival in the Colony I found a heavy debt of £2000 on my farm, and anything disposable sold. I had no alternative but to sell stock and reduce my capital which I have done at pretty long credit—In the meantime I am living on my pension and taking up money at 10 pr. ct. interest to pay the daily disbursements of my Farm, and meet my sons expenses in England—I can scarcely guide my pen for my nervous affection—I am working on lame limbs and a diseased brain but God's will be done—F. Forbes—'

I have exerted myself to copy this portion of a letter that you may be possessed with every information on this painful subject—but I ask you if after such a struggle when a long illness increased our difficulties and deprived my inexperienced children of such a Father at such a time of money difficulty felt by the wisest and ablest managers my paltry claim should under any circumstances be either canvassed or refused.

I have omitted mentioning that I wrote to Mr Wentworth who I fear did not receive my communication as favorably as I expected from one who knew & valued my husband. I also

spoke to Dr Bland who saw Mr Wentworth & without my knowledge mostly kindly waited on Mr Thomson. I fear I have wearied you but before I conclude this long letter I will name to you those members who I cannot but *think* will support my claim—Mr Mere-wether Major Christie Col Barney Col Gibbes Mr Murray Mr Nicols Mr Manning Mr Bowman. Mr Wentworth I should suppose will not vote against it. Mr Cowper is doubtful though kindly disposed towards myself. Mr Donaldson may oppose on principle, Mr Lamb will certainly; there may be some I have forgotten but under these circumstances considering the merits of my case & my necessities would you advise me to persevere—I shall bitterly feel the injustice done to me if I give it up.

Source: Macarthur Papers vol. 27, In-letters 1847–56.



99 Mrs Lang Presents Compliments to Mr Parkes

John Dunmore Lang, Australia's first Presbyterian minister, was a battler, and his wife Wilhelmina (*née* Mackie) did not lag far behind. She was his first cousin and his most active supporter, at times in ways not fully in keeping with the contemporary idea of a clergyman's wife.

Her personal life had its tragedies, since she lost five of her ten children in infancy, but her spirit was not quenched. She was rude to Brisbane because he signed a refusal of funds to her husband, and she refused money collected by the congregation because it had not been offered during his lifetime. One of her best efforts was an uproar she created in the church when her husband was overseas. The Rev. J. McGubbin, the incumbent, was stung to make a formal complaint to the governing body of Scots Church. Mrs Lang had made a house-to-house collection for a protégé who drank and whom McGubbin would not have as an elder. At the same time, she spread a rumour that McGubbin was planning to eject her from the Manse. The poor minister complained that Mrs Lang was 'circulating this slander with all the zeal of an enthusiast', calling him hypocrite, scoundrel and unworthy of his cloth. Compared with that outburst, this letter to Henry Parkes is mild.

M^D Lang presents Compliments to M^r. Parkes, and would feel obliged by his returning her letter with the volume accompanying it, as she presumes he does not intend to publish it in the Empire.

M^D L. begs also to express the regret that, in noticing her husband's case in his Summary for England on Saturday last, M^r - Parkes should have represented the Governor as very favourably inclined towards D^r Lang, but restrained from shewing him any indulgence on account of the representations of the Judges. This was as much as to say that D^r. L.'s case was

so very flagrant that even the Governor, though well disposed towards him, would shew him no favour. Now M^r L. thinks such a notice as this was not a very friendly act towards D^r Lang. She felt the more hurt at it because she believed it was not the truth, what ever M^r Parkes might think, as she feels persuaded that the Governor had no friendly intentions towards her husband, but the very reverse, from the first. His Excellency had got his answer from Judge Dickinson, on M^r L's petition before the Sydney memorial was presented on the 18th of August. In the afternoon of that day M^r Bolleston wrote M^r L. advising her to with-draw her petition, & he not only sent a copy of his letters to her to M^r Campbell but a private note also, advising him to use his influence with M^r L., to induce her to do so. Now as the Governor would get no new opinion from the Judge on the memorial, it is plain enough to M^r L., & she believes to every one else, that all this was a mere trick or trap to induce her to withdraw her petition, that His Excellency's refusal of the memorial might be the more keenly felt. And surely M^r Parkes has seen enough of the Governor's spirit & doings to believe him quite capable of such meanness.

College Buildings 25 Septr 1855

H—. Parkes Esq, M.L.C.

Source: Lang Papers (MS. A926, ML, 25/9/1855), vol. 9, p. 219.



100 *Three Women Write from the South*

The name Murray has a special significance in Australia; Terence and his descendants all excelled in their fields. His brother James, that sensitive and rather melancholy man, and his sister Anna Maria, writer of the third letter, are less well known, but in their respective ways are almost equally remarkable. Terence's first wife was not of heroic mould. Mary (Minnie) Gibbes was not of the stuff of pioneers, but small in body, light-hearted and gay, artistic and utterly unfitted for the life marriage brought her. Uprooted from Sydney and her family, she was condemned to loneliness in the harsh wide spaces of southern New South Wales. She bore six children, lost three, and died agonisingly after the birth of the last. Her letter to her friend Mary Wilson (the later wife of Terence Murray's closest friend, Stewart Mowle) gives us a clear picture of her.

[Yarralumla]

. . . Do you know Mr Alexander Rossi? He has just come up from Hobart Town and says there is no end to the gaiety there. Do you live too far off to join in it and how do you pass your time? I suppose you are getting on with the ottoman you intended working in worsted and which is as I imagine to embellish your future drawing room . . .

Do you ever have any new music now? It is just as difficult as ever to get a pretty song here but Stewart still continues copying such of mine as he admires so you will have a fine collection by the time you require it, and he does copy so very beautifully . . . Do you paint now? I finished the group which I commenced when you were here and I have sent to Sydney for some nice copies as I have taken rather a fancy to it, but I assure you I have not quite so much spare time since the arrival of my little Leila . . .

I have written you a most stupid letter but you know I live in a dull part of the world . . . Believe me ever, my dearest Mary, your affectionate and sincere friend, Minnie Murray.

Mary Wilson had a life more tragic and violent in contrasts, partly through events in the early death of her parents and her consequent poverty, and partly through the intensity of her nature, and her bitter rebellion against the hardships she had to bear which she revealed in these brief quotations from her diary:

January. 1851

. . . I have three fine children to be grateful for and in their endearments partly forget what I suffer . . . So, though time and care have set their impress on my brow and scarred my best affections, yet will they never efface the remembrance of my father's kindness and affection . . . Constantly do I recall the days of my childhood and bitterly, sadly and bitterly, as in the first hour of my affliction, feel the loss of my dear father.

2 January. A dreadful hot day. Stewart went to Queanbeyan with Aubrey and returned about five o'clock . . . Stewart and James intend going with Aubrey wombat hunting, so I am left all by myself for two days. The former spent the evening at Yarrowlumla.

Her misery was set down in a detailed catalogue of her routine:

7 January. The same old story—get up—dress the children . . . Fed the poultry—breakfast—go to work—put [babies] to sleep—hear Florence her lessons—dine—read—feed chickens—work till sunset . . . stroll about till dark—put Kate to bed—have tea—undress the others—play the piano for an hour, my chief solace—work till eleven—go to bed and rise each morning to recommence the same routine . . . God forbid that I should pass any reflections on the Author of my being, especially when He lavished so much on my ill-fated self.

This letter, written to her husband when on a visit to her relatives in Tasmania, tells us a good deal about her, and the nagging paragraph about the good times her husband was having and the generally depressing tone stress the essential differences between them. He was cheerful, and possibly all too glad to leave her for the more stimulating company of Terence Murray, who was almost a hero to him.

Mount [? Teymouth ? Seymour] August 4th 1854

My very dearly loved Stewart

I had the pleasure of receiving your note of the 19th of July the day before yesterday and I am indeed glad that you wrote to me by the steamer, for the 'Fair Tasmanian' has not yet arrived & I should have been dreadfully disappointed at not hearing from you for such a

length of time—as it is, I am rather vexed at not hearing more frequently—especially as I have written to you regularly every week since we arrived here until lately.

Your letter of the 3rd July gave me much pleasure, if possible more than usual for I was suffering from severe indisposition & it was so soothing to hear from you & be assured of your affection. We have had rather a sad time of it since I last wrote to you, have had so much sickness that my visit has not been a very merry one—indeed, it could not have been more unfortunately timed.

I fear you will be disappointed at seeing so little improvement in the appearance of either the children or myself. We were greatly shocked a little while ago by the sudden death of poor John Hudspeth—he had been here a few days before in apparently good health and spirits, & spent the night with us—the next heard of him was that he had poisoned himself. This sad news was told me suddenly & gave me such a shock that I was nearly a fortnight before I got over it. I went to Bowsden as soon as I could, & found it oh! such a changed place, it might truly now be called the Land of Desolation. Elizabeth and his aunt were all that was affectionate and kind but they were of course much depressed in spirits & seemed almost stunned by their succession of domestic afflictions—They are all going home in January. I did not take any of the children with me fearing they might prove troublesome in a house of mourning but have promised to spend a week with them before returning home. I am glad that you saw poor Mrs Clarke, poor creature she had sad news to hear on your arrival at Port Phillip for I believe John & she were attached to each other—I hope she visited the Eastern House.

You have had fine times of it since I have been away—I am sure you cannot complain of having been dull, visiting & receiving visitors continually. I am glad you like Patrick's sister. Is Dr King skilled in his profession? You know I have a life interest in the question.

I shall rejoice to be home again to be with you, my dearest husband once more—I propose returning by the next trip of the 'Fair Tasmanian' which will be I suppose about the end of this month—I would not defer it until September on account of the Equinoctial Gales, unless you could positively promise to come by her that trip—I dread the voyage very much & wish that it were over & that I was safely seated by my own happy fireside—I think of trying to get a nurse in Hobarton unless you have any objection. You know I must get one soon & attending to the children is really too much for me in my present state of health, besides I do not like the idea of returning without a female to attend me on the voyage. Have you made any purchases during my absence? if you have any money to spare I will get a hearthrug while in town—send me as much as you can, it shall not be wasted—travelling expences too will run away with a great deal—I have only been twice out of the house since I last wrote, to Bowsden & to church. George drove me to the former place in the gig and all went to the latter in the cart. I cannot tell you how I miss my drives I never put my foot out of doors & suffer frequently from great depression of spirits in consequence, besides it is of no use to disguise that my husband is more to me than all the world—& I am longing to return to him—That it will be a grievous trial to say farewell to those I must leave behind me, I cannot deny, but still I must return.

Influenza is raging in the house at a great rate & laying them all up by turns—the children & I have escaped as yet but James has been very ill, he looks wretched but is getting better—George & Jeannie have managed to keep out of their beds but that is all—they are wandering about the house looking like ghosts. Poor George is a great sufferer but he bears his troubles most patiently, he is an excellent young man & I am more attached to him than to any of the others though I am very fond of them all. Margaret & [?] Jeannie] are in bed

now the two youngest girls just recovering—Heaven grant that I may escape—I do not like being ill away from you, especially just now I want to gain a little strength for my homeward passage.

I must thank you very much for the interesting letters sent me by the 'Tasmanian'—I always peruse them with great delight. Extracts from my diary in comparison with yours would be very tame for we have such a quiet life—one or two will suffice.

Wednesday June 29th. The Scotch Minister Mr Campbell and Mr Brock dined with us; the former stayed all night, the latter part of the evening. I do not think much of Mr Campbell, he was abusing the Episcopalian nearly all supper time—I had to walk out of the room lest wrath should get the better of discretion.

Tuesday 29th July (being at Bowsden) The ground was covered with snow this morning when we got up & as the day proved very unfavourable we made up our minds to spend it at Bowsden—snowing and raining incessantly—we were greatly surprised by a visit from Mr & Mrs Isons who arrived about four o'clock in a heavy shower they remained all night—I rather like them both though I do not think Mr Isons comes up to Elizabeth's description of him.

Excuse this abrupt ending. I thought to have received orders to return next trip & money—I wished to have done so but unless you enclose the latter to me by steamer I cannot—let us decide that if I get money by steamer I shall return next trip of the 'Fair Tasmanian' if you take the trip after but positively by Cosmopolite.

God bless you & thank you for your kind & loving letters I have been ill with influenza, the children are all slight sufferers from it.

With most devoted most affectionate love,
believe me your ever faithful Mary Mowle.

Anna Bunn, third of the trio, and elder sister to Terence, was the most interesting of the three Murrays and probably the most gifted. This sensible letter to the doctor, then at his Woden property, shows her kindness and interest in the people around her. Her novel, the first written by a woman in New South Wales, reveals another side. Her record of standing on the verandah of her Ultimo home and seeing across the paddocks her husband's carriage turning onto the main road in the wrong direction towards the cemetery, some days before his sudden death, is evidence of her psychic gift. Not less curious, in view of her concern for Edward Cullen, an orphan, is her seeming indifference to the loneliness and frustration of her son when he was alone with assigned servants on one of their properties. One could wish for more of her letters to unify her complex elements.

St Omer, Braidwood
May 10th 1856

My Dearest James,

I was very gratified to hear from Terence, when he was here, about six weeks since, that you were in good health and spirits, but I regretted your not having adopted the artificial limb. Had I been half this time at Woden, I think you would not be quite active

upon it, at least, I would have exerted all my energies to induce you to make use of it. I hope you will endeavour to do what many others find so easy.

I wrote to you this morning to request you to copy for me, in either pencil or ink, whichever you find the more convenient, an Indenture, which is in a book in your study called *The English Language*, between masters and apprentices. We are about to bind an orphan, aged ten, for five years to a Braidwood shoemaker, named Brown: (the child's name is Edward Cullen;) and Willie says he can manage to do all that is necessary himself with the aid of this copy without having recourse to Mr. B. Bradley.

The letter you were so kind as to redirect to me, some weeks past, was from Kate. She desired her kindest regards to you; and she requested me to tell you, I give her own words: 'I think him unkind for not letting me know how he is getting on.'

Kate sent me some London news, received through Mrs Bradshaw, some of which may interest you. Mrs Bradshaw's sister, Miss Letitia Costigan has lain buried in the Church of *Santa Croce* for two years. Mr Bradshaw's brother-in-law, a person young wealthy and a favourite in Society, has become a monk in one of the severest orders. He told the loveliest young ladies that at balls and parties, he had never felt quite happy: and that in the midst of music and [? Ladies], he felt that he was not satisfied. So he became a monk: and now he feels his soul satisfied and his heart at rest. My dear friend Mrs Borgia of whom you have so often heard me speak, is now among the dead.

With Willie's and George's kindest regards to you, and my best wishes to [? Donnald],

Believe me to be ever,

My dearest James,

Your affectionate sister,

Anna Maria Bunn.

Source: Mowle Papers (NLA).



101 Epilogue: Two Australians Look at the Old World

Adelaide Ironside, protégé of Dr and Mrs J.D. Lang, who first recognised her talent and procured for her the means to study in Rome, was the first Australian woman painter to establish herself abroad and make a reputation there. She left for Rome in 1857 and died there ten years later, having painted W.C. Wentworth and the Prince of Wales, obtained special privileges from the Pope to study pictures in the Vatican, and exhibited at the Great Exhibition. She adored the old world, especially Italy, and saw life there through the most romantic eyes. Republican, minor poet, adequate painter of large, impressive canvases, she represents a new Australian type.

So, too, in a different way, and from a much more sophisticated background, does Elise Breton, half-orphan granddaughter of John Blaxland, who spent her early years at Newington in the care of her aunt, Louisa Australia Blaxland (according to an article in the *Peaceful Army* a self-avowed fervent patriot), to whom she wrote this letter. She then joined her father and wrote her letter when he was a colonel and governor at Southampton. She was invited to lunch with the Queen, coming or going from Osborne, and later attended a royal ball, observing the exalted assemblage with the same calm good sense with which as 'Baby' she had watched Bishop Broughton in full episcopal vestments performing the marriage ceremony for her cousin (the Ritchie-Boydell wedding; see L. 74).

In contrast to Adelaide, Elise lost nothing of her deep-seated awareness of herself as an Australian, and her letter serves to introduce the dawn of the Australian world created by the gold rushes and representative government.

In December 1857 Adelaide added a postscript to Lang in a letter to his wife.

. . . I should have written to you before this, my dear Doctor, about my Art, and home, in the old melancholy Mother of the glorious Past, the mystical City of my earliest dream, but as I have had to shape the spiritual into the material life, by earnest study, line upon line, I have let the years slip by; and have only kept you and the grand eloquence which I so reverenced from my earliest years, in my memory, in hope one day by my own hands to help in immortalising you in the Frescoed story for the future history of our Country. I should be happy to see you in statued marble, somewhere on the sea coasts of the city, where you might be seen first by the new arrivals in the colony, and hailed as you so fully and richly deserve to be, as the Patriot Father of the Free and Golden Lands of Australia.

Mama cares little for Italy . . . Italy, *my* Dream is the soul's home of the Poet, the Artist and the Seer!

Elise's letter grew in snatches between August 2nd and 18th, and begins with attempts to bridge gaps in news caused by some letters going astray. Then she continues:

. . . You say you did not receive my letter about my lunch with Her Majesty, so I shall go back even to that, for I know you will want to hear my own story of it. It was a great surprise to me being invited to it, & we had a large party of our friends to lunch after the Launch of the 'Marlborough' but of course the invitation to meet the Queen set all else aside, so Aunt Dimond who was then with us, took charge of our home party. The lunch was at the Admiralty House here, & we supposed that we shld remain in an ante-room seeing the Queen only at lunch—you may therefore imagine my surprise when on entering the room, & on Lady Cockran's mentioning my name, I saw a Lady advance at once, the whole length of the room, to the door where I was, & this was the Queen! She spoke to me in the kindest way, for altho' not frightened, I was so completely taken by surprise (for it never entered my imagination that she *wld* notice me,) that I was fairly bewildered & the Queen saw this & seemed really anxious to set me at my ease—After speaking a little about the launch, she turned to Papa & spoke to him for some time. Her manner is *perfection*, for it



The Prisoner of Gisore, sketch by Adelaide Ironsides. Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

is not merely gracious, but so kind—, & she had a kind word or a smile for every one, & yet every movement shows the Queen—At Luncheon I was sitting within 3 of the Queen, & opposite Prince Albert, so I had a good opportunity of seeing them. Altogether I enjoyed the Party extremely, not the less so, as I knew my Aunt Loo would like to hear the Queen's kindness to me . . .

Lord Harding, private secretary to Queen Victoria, stayed with the Bretons.

. . . I did not like him the less for what he told Papa—that *I did credit to my country* . . . my great ambition is not to disgrace my own dear country—the aunt who was a mother to me . . .

Later she added another of her vivid pictures of Royalty:

. . . The Royal Party looked well, the Queen was well dressed, & danced most gracefully, & *very* quietly. She danced every Quadrille, but only waltzed once with the Duke of Cambridge. The Duchesses of Kent & Cambridge were *stout* and not handsome, but looked good natured The Princess Mary* is very stout & not handsome, but with such a sweet joyous expression that she looked quite loveable, altho' not strictly handsome, Prince Albert & the Duke of Cambridge looked handsome but I cared more to watch the Princess Royal, for she seemed so *thoroughly* happy—she is not at all pretty but in manner is so exactly like the Queen & seems so amiable & *nice* she too was *very* quiet, even when dancing a reel . . .

She added a description of her own dress, made by her maid.

* The Princess Mary became Duchess of Teck, mother of George V's consort, Queen Mary.

Sources: Lang Papers vol. 9; Blaxland Papers.



Index

The names which appear in this Index have been entered as they are to be found in the text (Arthur, Gov., *but* Bourke, Sir Richard). Names of women are the exception: in order to avoid numerous cross-references, women are listed under both their married and maiden names regardless of which of these actually appears in the text.

The entries give the number which heads the letter(s), not the page number. Numbers in bold type refer to the commentary written by Helen Heney, while numbers in ordinary type refer to the primary source as published in the text.

Abbreviations have been indexed according to the abbreviated spelling (Gov. follows George) and the letter 'n' immediately following references indicates a footnote in the text.

- Abell, Lucia, née Balcombe, **58**, 58, 62, 62,
96, 96
aborigines
 adoption of, 8
 confidence of, 1, 3
 depredations of, **37**, 37
 mentality of, a debate, **81**, 81
 savagery of, 14, **40**, 75, 85
 schooling of, **37**, 40
Abbott, Edward, **13**, 17
Abrahams, Esther, **28**
Addison, Capt., 69
adultery, 46
Aiken, Dr, 77
Anderson, Major, **71**, 78, 82
Anley, Charlotte, **59**, 70
Antill, Henry Colden, **26**, 35, 63
Antill, Eliza, née Wills, **26**, 35, 63
Arbuthnot, Capt., 39
Arlett, Mary, **68**, 68
Arndell, Elizabeth, née Burleigh, **40**
Arndell, Sarah, **40**, 40
Arndell, Thomas, **40**
Arney, Major, 86
Arney, Mrs, 86
Arthur, Gov., **86**
Ascough, Capt., 65
Aspinall, Mrs, **83**
Atkinson, Mrs, née Waring, 61, 61n
Austen, Jane, **67**
Australian Agricultural Company, the, **67**, 67
 breaking up of, 95, 95n
 Australian College, the, 77
 Aylesbury, Earl of, 44
Balcombe, Lucia, **58**, 58, 62, 62, **96**, 96
Balcombe, William, **52**, **58**, 96
Balfour, Col., 49
Balmain, Mr, his double heart, 18
Baker, Ann, née Camfield, **90**, 90
Baker, Ashford, **90**, 90
Baker, William, **37**, 37
Barfiell, John, 48
Barker, Sarah, 14
Barney, Col., 98
barracks, 3, 17
Barret, John, **48**
Barret, Mary, **48**, 48
Basset, Marnie, **79**
Bateson, Charles, 2
Bathurst, Lord, **43**
Bayly, Nicholas, **41**
Baynon, Margaret, **28**, 28
Beagle, the, visit of, **44**, 85
Bedford, Eleanor, 92
Bedford, William, **92**, 92
Bennelong, 3
Bent, Eliza, **34**, 35n, **38**, 38, 54, 54, 57
Bent, Ellis, **24**, **38**, 38, 54
Bent, Jeffrey Hart, 38
Bent, the family, **39**, 45n, 54
Betts, Mary, née Hassall, **97**
Betts, Sarah, 97
Bevan, David, 28

- Beulab*, the, 94
 bigamy, 46
 Bigge, commissioner, 20, 43, 52
 Bird, Sarah, 10, 10
 birds, beauty of, 14, 16, 16, 31, 31, 56, 66, 74, 78
 Blachford, Miss, 65
 Bland, Sarah, née Henry, 40n, 47, 47
 Bland, William, 47, 47, 98
 Blaxland, Anna, 74, 74
 Blaxland, Harriet, 74
 Blaxland, Jane, 56, 59n, 74
 Blaxland, John, 24, 74, 101
 Blaxland, Louisa Australia, 74, 101
 Blaxland, the family, 35n, 61n, 74
 Bligh, Sir William, Gov., 17, 23, 23, 24, 25, 26, 26, 48, 61, 73
 Bligh, Mary, 23, 24, 24
 Blomfield, Christiana, née Brooks, 52, 52
 Blomfield, the family, 65
 Blomfield, T.V., 61n
 Bobart, Elizabeth, née Hassall, 47, 97
 Bolleson, Mr, 99
 Boswell, James, 4
 botany
 study of, 3, 11, 6, 78, 82, 82, 83
 at Elizabeth Farm, 62, 64, 82
 Botts, Mr, 78
 Bourke, Anne, 60, 78, 78, 89
 Bourke, Sir Richard, Gov., 60, 62, 74n, 76n, 78, 91
 Bourke, Hon. J., 55
 Bowes (Smyth), Arthur, 2
 Bowman, Mary, née Macarthur, 37, 40n, 62
 Bowman, Dr, 62, 62, 98
 Brabyn, Miss, 65
 Bradshaw, Mrs, 100
 Brady, Mr, 91
 Breton, Elise, 74, 101
 Brisbane, Sir Charles, 54
 Brisbane, Sir Thomas, Gov., 43, 45n, 46, 55, 44, 57, 63, 63n, 74, 74, 95, 95n, 99
 Brisbane, Lady, née Makdougall, 45, 45, 56, 67, 95
 Brisbane, the family, 74
 Brock, Mr, 100
 Bromoley, Alice, 40, 40
 Brookes, Dame Mabel, 58
 Brooks, Capt., 52
 Brooks, Christiana, 52, 52
 Brooks, Jane, 52
 Brooks, the family, 52, 65
 Broughton, Bishop, 91, 92, 92, 101
 Broughton, Mrs, 92, 92, 74
 Brown, Mr, the shoemaker, 100
 Bryant, Mary, 4
Buffalo, the, 5, 11, 16, 19, 19, 31
 Bundock, Ellen, née Ogilvie, 85
 Bundock, Mr, 85
 Bunn, Anna Maria, née Murray, 100, 100
 Burleigh, Elizabeth, 40
 Burnett, William, 32
 Burrows, Jane, 68
Calcutta, the, 17
 Camfield, Ann, 90, 90
 Camfield, Eliza, 90
 Camfield, Henry, 90
 Camfield, Maria, 90, 90
 Camfield, Matilda, 90
 Camfield, Mrs (Henry), 90
 Campbell, Colina, 71, 71
 Campbell, J., Gov. Macquarie's Sec., 28, 28, 38, 38
 Campbell, Mr, Scotch minister, 100
 Campbell, Robert, 17, 75
 Campbell, the family, 24, 61, 65, 70
 Carmichael, Henry, 94
 Carmichael, Maria Eva, née Schubach, 94
 Cartwright, Mr, 74
 Cartwright, Rev. Robert, 40n
 Catchpole, Margaret, 1, 9, 10, 12, 14, 14, 15, 22, 23, 27, 27, 30, 30, 31, 31, 88
 Chalmers, Lucinda, 91
 Chambers, Mr, 91
 Chapman, Mr, preacher, 86
 Chapman, Ann, 33, 33
 Charles, Michael, bushranger, 86
 Chatham, Earl of, 62
 Childes, Major, 86
 children
 a cause of anguish, 40, 40
 born on board ship, 2, 4
 death of, 2, 3, 4, 10, 80
 education of, 7, 11, 26, 51, 66, 66, 85,
 see also school
 good country for, 14
 health of, 66, 66, 96
 land held in trust for, 28, 28
 left behind, 4, 4, 5, 55, 55
 left in want, 98
 of first fleet, 1
 of natives, 3, *see also* aborigines
 proliferation of, 52
 women are slaves to them, 100
 Chisholm, Caroline, 55, 87
 Christie, Mr, 98
 Clark, Manning, 76, 91
 Clark, Ralph, 2, 11
 Clarke, Mrs, 100
 Cleveland, Major, 34, 34, 35
 Close, Mr, 52
 Close, Mrs, 52
 clothes
 cost of, 14, 23, 30, 66
 for babies, 2
 for trading in, 10, 53
 for weddings, 65, 82
 from Merino wool, 11
 Mrs Lowe's, 83
 scarcity of, 1
 Clunes Innes, Archibald, 60n
 Clunes Innes, Margaret, née Macleay, 60n
 Clunes Innes, the family, 60
 Cobbold, Mrs, 12, 12, 14, 14, 27, 27, 30, 31
 Cobbold, Rev. Richard, 9, 9, 12, 31, 31, 88, 88

- Cobley, John, 4
 Coleby, 3
 Collecott, Matron, 40n
 Collett, Elizabeth, 14
 Collins, David, 2, 19
 Connell, the family, 65
 Considen, Mr, First Fleet surgeon, 18n
 Cook, Capt., John, 2n
 Corkcroft, Capt., 86
 Cowper, Dr, 54, 77, 98
 Cowper, Macquarie, preacher, 77
 Cowper, Mrs, 74
 Cox, Edward, 28, 28, 52
 Cox, Elizabeth, née Piper, William's third wife, 65
 Cox, Jane, née Brooks, Edward's wife, 52
 Cox, Mrs, née Blachford, William's second wife, 65
 Cox, Rebecca, William's first wife, 28, 28, 52, 65
 Cox, William, 21, 28, 65n
 croppies, *see* Irish prisoners
 Crossley, George, 15
 Crowl, Dr, 86
 Cullen, Edward, 100
 Cunningham, Lord, 55
- Danvers, Elizabeth Sophia, 59, 59
 Danvers, Hon. Augustus Richard Butler, 59, 59
 Darch, Mr, Sir E. Parry's Sec., 66
 Darling, Gov., 43, 48, 57, 57, 59, 70, 76n
 Darling, Eliza, née Dumaresq, 57, 59, 59, 61, 67, 70, 76, 76
 Darling, the family, 76, 96
 Darwin, Charles, 44, *see also* Beagle
 Daveron, Mr, 19
 Dawes, Mr, botanist, 3
 Deas Thomson, Anne, née Bourke, 60, 78, 78, 89
 Deas Thomson, Edward, 60, 78, 78, 89, 89
 de Falbe, *see* Falbe
 Dennott, Capt. Thomas, 28, 28
 Despard, Col., 76
 Dickenson, Mr, 83
 Dickinson, Judge, 99
 Digby, Mr, 78
 Digby, Mrs, 78
 Dixon, Capt., 65
 Dixon, Mrs, 65, 66
 Dobie, Dr, 78
 Donaldson, Miss, 82
 Donaldson, Mr, 98
 Donaldson, the family, 82
 Douglas, Dr, 55
 Dowling, Arthur, 84
 Dowling, Harriet, née Blaxland, 74
 Dowling, James jnr, 74, 80
 Dowling, Lady (James), 74, 98
 Dowling, Sir James, 74, 84, 84, 98, 98
 Dowling, Susan, 80, 84, 84
- Dowling, the family, 74
 Drennan, Frederick, 43
 dress, *see* clothes
 Driver, Mrs (Mrs Henry Marr), 50
 Dumaresq, Ann, 59
 Dumaresq, Edward, 59
 Dumaresq, Elizabeth Sophia, née Danvers, Henry's wife, 59, 59
 Dumaresq, Fanny, Edward's wife, 59
 Dumaresq, Henry, Col., 48, 59, 59, 60
 Dumaresq, the family, 60, 70
 Dumaresq, William, 59, 59
 Dunlop, Edward, astronomer, 45n, 95, 95n
 Dunlop, Eliza Hamilton, 81
- Eagar, Jemima, 69
 Edgar, Thomas, ship's agent, 2
 education
 see children
 female
 Lucas
 Manning
 School
 Scott
 sunday school
 Edwards, Lt., 86
 Edwards, Mrs Elizabeth (Lockaye?), 57, 57
 Elder, Capt., 32
 Eldershaw, Barnard, 3
 Eldon, Lord, 79
 Elizabeth Farm, 7, 7, 17, 17, 25, 37, 62, 62, 64, 82, *see also* Rose Hill, Parramatta
 Esden, Lydia, 41, 41
 Europe, romantic view of, 101, 101
 Evans, George, 21, 21
 Evans, Jennett, 21, 21
 Ewing, Dr, 86
 Eyre, the explorer, 58
- Falbe, Emmeline de, née Macarthur, 74, 82
 Fanning, Mrs, 82
 Farrell, Mrs, 86
 Fay, Charles, 68
 Fay, Mrs (Charles), 68
 Female Factory, *see* Parramatta Female Factory
 Female Orphan School, *see* School
 Ferguson, Mr, 54
 Ferriter, Mrs, 77
 Field, Barron, Judge-Advocate, 60
 Finch, Lady Charlotte, 50
 First fleet, the, 1, 1, 2, 4, 50, 91
 FitzRoy, Lady Mary, 29, 73, 73n, 82, 82, 90
 FitzRoy, Sir Charles, Gov., 82, 82, 89, 90, 95, 98
 FitzRoy, the family, 83
 Fitzwilliam, the Family, 18
 flogging, for being saucy, 2
 floods, 21, 27, 27

- food
 abundance of, 75, 83, 90, 90, 94
 at parties, 66
 cost of, 10, 14, 23, 27, 30, 45, 45, 83,
 84
 lack of, 1, 2, 6, 28, 93
see also floods, puddings, Rose Hill
- Forbes, Lady Amelia Sophia, 74, 98
 Forbes, Mr (snr), 66, 98
 Forbes, Mrs (snr), 98
 Forbes, Sir Francis, 74, 98, 98
 Foster, Mr, 86
 Francis, Mr, 73
 Franklin, Lady, 32, 60, 78, 89
 Freeman, William, 46
 Freycinet, his expedition, 51
Friendship, the, 11,
 Fristan, Elizabeth, Mrs Marsden, 8, 8, 34
 fruit growing, 22, 22
 Fry, Elizabeth, 59, 70, 70
 Fulton, Miss, 40n
 Fulton, Rev. Henry, 28, 30
- Garling, Frederick, 52n
 Garling, Mrs (Frederick), 52, 52n
 Garstone, Lt., 86
Gazette, the Sydney, *see* Sydney Gazette
 Geils, Major, 34, 34
 Geils, Mrs, 34, 34
 Gibbes, Col., 98
 Gibbles, Mary ('Minnie'), 100
 Gidley, Mr, 79
 Gilbert, Mrs (John), 93
 Gipps, Gov., 60, 78, 77, 83, 89, 89
 Gipps, Lady Elizabeth, 77, 83, 83, 89, 89
 Gipps, Rev. Henry, 89
 Glenne, Mr, 49
 Gore, Ann, 75, 75, 77
 Gore, Mrs (William), 43, 43n
 Gore, William, 43n, 75
 Goulburn, Frederick, 43, 44, 60, 60n
 governesses, their marriage problems, 61,
 61n, 66
 Graham, Sally, 65
 Granville, Lord, 83
 Gregory, Dame M. Scholastica, 91
 Grose, Major Francis, 7, 7, 32
Guardian, the, 2
 Gunther, Archdeacon, 69
- Hall, E. Smith, 63
 Hall, Mrs, 40, 40
 Halloran, Dr Lawrence Hynes, 57, 57n
 Hamilton, Capt., 86
 Harding, Capt., 86
 Harding, Lord, 101
 Harding, Mrs, 26
 Harris, Dr John, 28, 61
 Harris, Mrs (John), 50, 61
 Harrington, T., 60
- Hart, Frances, 39
 Hassall, Anne, née Marsden, 40, 97, 97
 Hassall, Catherine ('Kate'), 97
 Hassall, Elizabeth, Anne's sister Mrs Bobart,
 47, 97
 Hassall, Elizabeth, Mrs Rowland, 36, 36, 97
 Hassall, James (Anne's son), 97
 Hassall, Mrs Betts, 97
 Hassall, Mary Ann (Anne's daughter), 97
 Hassall, Mary Cover, Mrs Lawry, 40, 40, 47
 Hassall, Rev. Thomas (Elizabeth's son), 36,
 40, 40, 47, 56
 Hassall, Rowland, 66, 84
 Hassall, Samuel, 37
 Hassall, the family, 36, 40, 42
 Haydock, Mary ('Molly'), *see* Reibey, Mary
 Hayward, Mr, a missionary, 40
 Hedges, Mr, 40, *see also* Esden, Lydia
 Hely, Lucretia, 55, 55
 Henry, Emmeline, née Macarthur, 58, 95,
 96, 96
 Henry, Mr, 40n
 Henry, Sarah, 40n, 47, 47
 Henty, Matilda, née Camfield, 90
 Henty, William, 90
 Hill, Capt., 3
Hillsborough, the, 26, 28
 Hodgson, Eliza, 84
 Hodgson, Frank, 84
 Holman, Mr, 86
 Hope, Mrs (George), née Mary Ann Hassall,
 97
 Hope, Mrs (Robert), née Catherine Hassall,
 97
 Hordern, Ann, 53, 53
 Hordern, Anthony, 53, 53
 Hordern, the family, 53, 53
 Hoseason, Capt., 82
 Hoskins, Mr, a lay worker, 40n
 Howe, George, 26, 77
 Howe, Miss, 66, 77
 Howe, Sarah Mrs (George), née Wills, 26, 26,
 77
 Howes, William, 30, 30
 Hudspeth, John, 100
 Hume, Alexander Hamilton, 28, 28
 Hume, Elizabeth, 28, 28
 Hume, Hamilton, 28
 Hunter, Gov., 11, 13, 28
 Huntly, Marquis of, 65
 Huskisson, Secretary of State, 57
- Icely, Mr, 49, 78
 Influenza, 100, *see also* children
 Innes, *see* Clunes Innes
 Innes, George, 60, 60n
 Innes, the family, 65
 Irish rebellion, the (1798), 11, 11, 91
 Irish uprising, the (1804), 17, 17, 21, 91
 Ironside, Adelaide, 101
 Isons, Mr, 100
 Isons, Mrs, 100

Jacob, Mrs, 84
 Jamison, Sir John, 60, 60n, 74, 74n
 Johnson, Richard, chaplain, 8, 8
 Johnston, Major George, 26, 28, 28, 34, 73
 see also Julian, Esther
 Jones, Mr, 50, 82
 Jones, Mrs, 77
 Julian, Esther, née Abrahams, 28
 Julian, Rebecca, 28
 Julian, Robert, 28
Justinian, the, 2

Kent, Capt. William, 5, 16, 19
 Kent, Eliza, 5, 5, 16, 16, 19, 19, 20
 Keys, Mr, from Bathurst, 73
 Kilman, Lord, 55
 King, Anna Josefa, 11, 15, 18, 18, 20, 21,
 28, 61, 79, 79
 King, Anna Maria, 61, 66, 79, 82
 King, Capt., 79, 82, 95
 King, Gov. Philip Gidley, 15, 18, 20, 21, 21
 King, Harriet, 61, 61, 62
 King, Mary, 61, 61
 King, Philip Parker, 95n
 King, the family, 61n
 Kingdon, Elizabeth, 37, 37
 Knox, Mr, 84

Lacey, Thomas, 27
Lady Juliana, the, 2
 Laidley, Mr, Commissary General, 66
 Lamb, Mr, 98
 land grants
 by Gov. Bligh, 61
 following the Rum Rebellion, 28, 28
 getting more difficult, 48, 49
 to unmarried females, 43, 43
 Lang, John Dunmore, 77, 91, 99, 99, 101
 Lang, Wilhemina, née Mackie, 99, 99, 101
 Lavers, Capt., 86
 Lavers, Mrs, 86
 Lawry, Br, missionary, 40
 Lawry, Mary Cover, née Hassall, 40, 40, 47
 Lawson, Sarah, née Leadbetter, 51, 51
 Lawson, the family, 51
 Lawson, William, 51
 Laycock, Hannah, 44
 Leadbetter, Sarah, 51, 51
 LeClerc, Dame Magdalen, 91
 Leslie, Catherine, née Macarthur, 82
 Leslie, Emmeline, née Macarthur, 74, 82
 Leslie, George, 82, 82
 Leslie, Patrick, 82, 82
 Leslie, Wattie, 82, 82
 Leslie, Willie, 82, 82
 Lethbridge, Arthur, 61, 61
 Lethbridge, Copland, 61, 61n, 79
 Lethbridge, Mary, née King, 61, 61
 Lethbridge, Mrs (Copland), 66, 96
 Lethbridge, Robert, L., 61, 61n

Lewis, Mr, 78
 Lindesay, Col., 62, 62
 Lockayc, *see* Lowkey
 Long, Mary, 40
 Lord, Simeon, 18, 20
Lord Melville, the, 46
 Lowes, Georgiana (Viscountess Sherbrooke),
 83, 83, 89, 98
 Lowes, Robert (Viscount Sherbrooke), 83,
 83
 Lowkey, escaped convict, 57
 Lucas, Mrs, 62
 Lucas, Penelope, governess, 62, 64, 64
 Luttrell, Edward, 28
 Luttrell, Martha, 28, 28

Macarthur, Anna Maria, née King, Hannibal's
 wife, 61, 66, 79, 82
 Macarthur, Annie, Mrs Wickham, 82, 82
 Macarthur, Catherine, 82
 Macarthur, Edward, 62, 62, 64, 22, 95, 96
 Macarthur, Elizabeth, John's wife, 3, 7, 8,
 19, 22, 25, 29
 her children, 3, 7, 8, 17, 17, 25, 28, 34,
 45, 45, 49, 50, 50, 56, 78
 her failing health and death, 95, 96, 96
 her husband's malady and death, 62, 62,
 64, 72, 72
 in her husband's absence, 37, 37
 on Gov. Bligh, 23, 23, 25, 34, 34
 on the Irish Rebellion, 17, 17
 Macarthur, Elizabeth jnr, 37, 37, 40, 40, 58,
 62, 62, 64
 Macarthur, Emmeline, Anna Maria's
 daughter, 74, 82
 Macarthur, Emmeline, Elizabeth's daughter,
 Mrs Henry, 58, 95, 96, 96
 Macarthur, Fanny, James' wife, 83, 97, 97n
 Macarthur, Hannibal, 37, 61, 61, 66, 79, 82,
 91
 Macarthur, James, 61, 61n, 83, 96
 Macarthur, John, 3, 7, 17, 20, 22, 64
 his imprisonment, 24, 26
 his stay in London, 34, 35, 37, 38, 61
 his tormenting complaint and death, 62,
 62, 72, 95, 96
 Macarthur, John jnr, 62, 62, 64, 96, 96
 Macarthur, Mary, Mrs Bowman, 37, 40n, 62
 Macarthur, the family, 60, 82, 94n, 95n
 Macdonald, Alexander, 22
 Macdonald, Barbara, 22, 22
 Macdonald, Mary, formerly Mrs Oliver, 22,
 22
 Macdonald, the family, 65
 Macintosh, James, 63, 63n
 Mackay, the family, 65
 Mackenzie, *see* McKenzie
 MacKenzie, Lt. Col., 77
 Mackie, Wilhemina, Mrs Lang, 99, 99, 101
 Macleay, Elizabeth, 60
 Macleay, Fanny, 60

- Macleay, George, 60
 Macleay, Kennetheana, 60
 Macleay, Margaret, 60n
 Macleay, Williams, 60, 60, 76, 76
 Macpherson, Major, 62, 62
 Macpherson, Miss, 86
 Macquarie, Elizabeth, 29, 34, 35, 35, 45,
 45n 63, 63
 Macquarie, Gov. Lachlan, 20, 24, 26, 28,
 28, 35, 37, 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45, 49,
 54, 63, 63n
 Makdougall, Elizabeth, Lady Brisbane, 45,
 45, 56, 56, 95
 McKenzie, Mary Ann, 58, 65
 McKenzie, Mrs, 65
 McKenzie, the family, 52, 65
 McLeod, Archibald, 71, 71
 McLeod, Colina, née Campbell, 71, 71
 McGubbin, Rev. J., 99
 Makinson, Mr, a convert, 91, 91
 Manning, Archdeacon, 91
 Manning, Edye, 66, 66
 Manning, Mrs (Edye), 66
 Manning, William, 66, 66, 98
 Marchment, Robert, 44, 44
 Marr, Henry, 50
 Marr, Mrs (Henry), Mrs Trellim then Mrs
 Driver, 50
 Marrisets, Major, 51
 Marsden, Anne, Mrs Hassall, *see also*
 Marsden, Elizabeth, her daughter, 40,
 97, 97
 Marsden, Charles, 65
 Marsden, Elizabeth, née Fristan, 8, 8, 34
 her daughter Anne, 8, 17, 17, 20, 20, 22
 Marsden, Rev. Samuel, 8, 17, 17, 19, 20, 22,
 34, 36, 40, 40, 70, 79
 Marsden, the girls, 63
 Marsden, the family, 61
 Marsh, Rosetta, 28, 28
 Marshall, Mary, 28, 28
Mary Ann, the, 4, 39
 Mason, Dr Martin, 29, 29
 Matcham, 13, 13
 Merewether, Mr, 98
Midas, the, 46, 50
 missionaries
 see aborigines, religion, school
 Mitchell, David, 90
 Mitchell, Elizabeth, 46, 46
 Mitchell, Hannah, 46
 Mitchell, Major, 77
 Mitchell, Howston, 77
 Mitford, Nancy, 67
 Molesworth, Margaret, 55
 Molle, Col., 37
 Molle, Mrs, 37
 money, making of
 very fast, 26, 30, 83, 83
 not so fast, 45, 45, 82, 82, 84
 not at all, 66, 66, 80, 81
 requests for, 6, 6, 12, 38, 98, 99
 Monroe, Capt., 4
 Moore, John, 62
 Moore, Mary, 28, 28
 Moran, Mary, 28, 28
 Mordale, Elizabeth White, née Robertson, 86
 Mowle, Mary, née Wilson, 100, 100
 Mowle, Stewart, 100
 Mullet, Mary, 28, 28
 Mundy, Col., 83
 Mundy, Mrs, 83
 Murray, Anna Maria, 100, 100
 Murray, Dr James 100
 Murray, Mary ('Minnie'), née Gibbes, 100
 Murray, Mr, 98
 Murray, Terence, 100
 Nelson, Admiral, 13
 Nelson, Lady, 18
 Nepean, Capt. Nicholas, 3
Neptune, the, 2
 Nesbit, Dr, 52
 Newman, Capt., 91
 Nicholls, Isaac, 28
 Nicholls, Rebecca, née Julian, 28
 Nicol, John, mariner, 2
 Nicols, Mr, 98
Nile, the, 12, 41
 Norfolk Island, 1, 2, 3, 14, 17, 19, 19, 20,
 20, 24, 35, 71, 86
 Notts, Mrs, a missionary, 36, 36
 Nugent, Lady Neta, 55
 Oakes, Mrs, 40
 Observatory, the, *see* Parramatta
 Observatory
 O'Connell, Maurice, 24, 34
 O'Connell, Mrs, née Bligh, 29, 34, 35n, 73
 officers
 buying up cargo, 7
 dispute with Gov. Bligh, 24
 dissatisfaction of, 1
 Ogilvie, Ellen, 85
 Ogilvie, Mary, 81, 85
 Oliver, Mary, *see* Macdonald
 Ovens, Major John, surveyor, 34, 34, 54, 96
 Padbury, Mr, 86
 painting, of the Prince of Wales, 101
 Palmer, John, 14, 27
 Palmer, the family, 24
 pardons,
 requests for, 2, 4, 19, 27, 28, 33
 granted, 68
 Parker, Dinah, 14
 Parker, Lady Emmeline, née Macarthur then
 Mrs Henry, 58, 95, 96, 96
 Parker, Mr, 89
 Parkes, Sir Henry, 99, 99

- Parramatta
 dispute over a house at, 15
 life at, 6, 6, 8, 8, 11, 14, 17, 34, 75, 98
 religion at, 40, 40
 safety of, 40
 those happy days at, 78
 wood production at, 22
see also Rose Hill, Elizabeth Farm,
 Hassall
- Parramatta Female Factory, the, 59, 61, 61n, 70
- Parramatta Observatory, 45n, 95
- Parramatta Passage Boat, the, 33
- Parramatta Quarter Sessions, the, 52
- Parry, Dr, 67
- Parry, Lady Isabella, 66, 67
- Parry, Sir Edward, 66
- Partland, Pat, 21
- Paterson, Col. William, 11, 11, 17, 28, 28
- Paterson, Elizabeth, 11, 11
- Peat, Charles, 1
- Philip, Gov., 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 6, 22, 48, 50
- Piper, Capt. John, 17, 17, 18, 19, 19, 20, 20, 25, 29, 34, 34, 35, 37, 38, 54, 58
- Piper, Col., 54
- Piper, Elizabeth, 65
- Piper, Mary Ann, *née* Shears, 29, 29, 52, 54, 58, 60
- Pitt, Elizabeth, 44, 44
- Pitt, Mary, 13, 13, 44
- Polding, Bishop, 91, 94
- pregnancies, unwanted or miscarried, 67, 69
- Prentice, Mr, 3
- press, letters to the, 1, 1, 4, 6, 6, 10, 81, 81
- Priddle, Miss, 82
- Prince of Wales, painting of the, 101
- promiscuity, 2
- Providence*, the, 29, 35
- puddings, 66
- Putland, Lt., 24, 24
- Putland, Mary, *née* Bligh, 23, 24, 24
- Queen, lunch with the, 101
- Radford, Maria, 80, 80
- Ranken, Janet, 49, 49
- Reddall, John, 65
- Reddall, Mrs (John), *née* Wentworth, 65
- Redfern, Dr William, 26, 63
- Redfern, Sarah, *née* Wills, 26, 26, 63, 63n
- Redfern, the family, 63, 63n
- refugees, 93
 from Germany, 94, 94n
- Reibey, Mary, 9, 32, 32, 88
- religion, lack of, 8
see also school, Irish rebellion, Roman, Scots Church
- religious discrimination, 91
- Riall, Gov. (West Indies), 54
- Riall, Mrs, 54
- Riddell, Mr, colonial Treasurer, 77
- Riley, the family, 65
- Ritchie, Alec, 74
- Ritchie, Harriet, *née* Blaxland, 74
- Ritchie, the family, 74
- Robertson, Elizabeth White, 86
- Robertson Gilbert, 86
- Robinson, Ann, 15, 15
- Rogers, Mr, 86
- Rolley, Samuel, 14
- Roman Catholic Church, the, 91
- Rose Hill, settlement of, 2, 3, 6, 7, 7
- Ross, Capt., 77
- Rossi, Alexander, 100
- Rosson, Elizabeth, schoolmistress, 1
- Rowe, Mr, solicitor, 46
- Rowland, Elizabeth, *née* Hassall, 36, 36, 97
- Rowlands, Mr, 86
- Rum Corps, the, 7, 11, 25
- Rum Rebellion, the, 11, 19, 25, 25, 26, 28, 28, 96
- Rumker, Mr, astronomer, 45, 45n
- Rutledge, Mrs (Mrs Knox), 84
- Ryrie, Janet, 77, 77
- Ryrie, the family, 77, 77
- Sadleir, Richard, 40n
- Sanders, Mr, 19
- Satt, Mr, 50
- Scarborough, the, 2
- School, the Female Orphan, 5, 11, 11, 24, 28, 28, 40n
- school
 founded by Eliza Darling, 59, 59n
 Roman Catholic, 91, 94
see also education, Sunday School
- Schubach, Maria Eva, 94
- Sconce, Mr, a convert, 91, 91
- Scots Church, the, 99
- Scott, Archdeacon, 62, 64
- Scott, Mr, 77
- Second Fleet, arrival of, 2
- servants
 alone with, 100
 negro, 97n
 no different from masters, 90, 94
 sure to marry, 66
see also governesses
- Shears, Mary Ann, 29, 29, 52, 54, 58, 60
- Sheen, Arthur, 84
- Sheen, James, 74, 84, 84
- Shelley, Mr, 90
- Sherrer, Mr, 19
- Sidaway, Robert, 1, *see also* Marshall, Mary
- Sidmouth, Lord, 46
- Simmons, Capt., 86
- Sirius, the, 2
- Smith, Ann, 15
- Smith Hall, E., *see* Hall
- Smith, Louisa, 40
- Smith, Mr, clergyman, 65
- Smith, Mrs, 65

- Smyth, Arthur Bowes, *see* Bowes
 Somerset, Lord Charles, 57
 Sparke, A.B., 80, 80
 Spencer, Susan, née Dowling, 80, 84, 84
 Stanley, Henrietta, 67
 Stanley, Lady, 67, 67
 Stanley, Lord, 67, 67
 Stebbing, Dr, 14, 14
 Stephen, Elanor, née Bedford, 92
 Stephen, Sir Alfred, 83, 92
 Stibbs, Sgt Gen., 42
 Strafford, Earl of, 18
 Strzelecki, Polish explorer, 61n, 94n
 Sudds affair, the, 59
 Sunday School, 36, 66
Surprise, the, 2
 Sutton, Mr, clerk, 20, 20
 Suttor, George, 73
 Suttor, Sarah, 73, 73
 Sydney Gazette, the, 10, 25
- Talbot, Lord, 55
 Talbot, Mary, 2, 4, 4, 66
 tea, 1, 14, 45
 Tench, Watkin, 2, 2
 Terry, Samuel, 28
 Therry, Fr, 91
 Thompson, Anne, 48, 48
 Thompson, Matthew Pearson, 48
 Thornton, Sarah, 22, 42, 42
 Thorp, Mr, 79
 Thorp, Mrs, 79
 Threlkeld, L. E., 40
 Throsby, Dr, 61, 61n
 Throsby, Miss, 61
 Tomes, Mr, 86
 Tomes, Mrs, 86
 Townsend, Mr, 74
 Townsend, Mrs, 74
 transport, conditions of, 13, 13
 Trellim, Mrs (Mrs Henry Marr), 50
 Tyson, Mrs, 86
- Underwood, Joseph, 46
- Wade, Mr, 86
 Walker, Anna, née Blaxland, 74, 74
 Wallace, Francis, 77
 Wallace, Janet, née Ryrie, 77, 77
 Walsh, Eliza, 43, 43
 Walsh, Miss (Eliza?), 57
 Ward, Br, missionary, 47
 Ward, Jane, 39
 Ward, Mrs, a widow, 43, 43n
 Waring, Miss, a governess, 61, 61n
 Watling, Thomas, 3
 Wemyss, Mrs William, 55
 Wemyss, Priscilla, 55, 55
 Wentworth, D'Arcy, 15, 15, 18, 18, 20, 69
 Wentworth, Miss, 65
 Wentworth, Sarah (Mrs William Charles), 69, 69
 Wentworth, the family, 69, 69, 101
 Wentworth, William Charles, 15, 57, 59, 63, 68, 69, 69, 98
 Westmeath, Lord, 55
 Wickham, Annie, née Macarthur, 82, 82
 Wickham, Capt., 82, 82
 Williams, Mr, 47
 Williams, Mrs, 47
 Williams, Mrs, of Port Philip, 82
 Williams, Thomas, his family, 55
 Williamson, Mr, Dept. Commissary, 17
 Williamson, Mrs, 17
 Wills, Edward, 26
 Wills, Eliza, 26, 35, 63
 Wills, Sarah, 26, 26, 77
 Wills, Sarah jnr, 26, 26, 63, 63n
 Wilson, Dr, 77
 Wilson, Mary, 100, 100
 Winchelsea, Earl of, 50
 Windeyer, Maria, née Camfield, 90, 90
 Windeyer, Mr, 90
 Windeyer, William, 90, 90
 Winn, Mrs, her family, 59
 wives, lack of suitable, 84,
 see also governesses
 Wood, Mrs Lucy, 44
 Worgan, George, 1, 2
 Wynde, Judge-Advocate, 38, 38
 Wynde, Thomas, clerk, 46

