

Hastings February 26<sup>th</sup> 1848

My Dear Brother and Sister,

We received your welcome letter with great pleasure and was all very glad to hear from you once more after so long a time We had almost given up all hope of seeing you or your handwriting any more as to Mother she felt sure she never should so you must think it a great pleasure to her and Father as well as the rest of the family to hear such good news of you and your Wife instead of being offended with you we was I can assure very glad to know that you are not quite alone in the World you have now a Companion and Friend in your own choice you have some one to speak to and advise with and I sincerely hope you have a happy and comfortable home be kind and do that which is right to your wife and she will I have no doubt return it to you as regard The state of the Country we are very glad to hear it is better and that you have it in your power to help others that needed it and that you have plenty of provisions as a great blessing I am sorry that the news you heard of home should have prevented you from trying to get home but I am half inclined to think it was a loadstone that kept you back for England thank God has never been so bad as you have heard although food of all kinds has been very dear Hastings is very dull and the trade bad in general nothing stirring or has been this four months everything seems quite at a stand at present but we hope it will be better soon I have my Dear

Brother no good news to send you I wish I had for I can assure you we have had an abundance of trouble ever since you have been gone you will think as I do that none of us can have felt it so much as Mother in the first place you was banished from home and in less than 3 months after our poor brother Charles followed you and we have not heard of him since and I am afraid we never shall now you know it is now 10 years since you have both been gone he was sent out to Vandiemans land for 14 years with a boy names Truelock his friends have had 2 letters from him but we have not had a single line I have sent you the particulars of it before but we think you could not have received all the letters that has been sent as you did not name it in yours The name of the Ship was the Egyptian we thought if you could have made any enquiry of your Master at the time I sent the news to you it would have been a little satisfaction to us to have known wether the ship reached the land it was bound to or not we have not the least hope of ever seeing him again he said a great deal in his letters before he went out about you it will hardly bear thinking of if you recollect his age was but 14 years you would like to hear of all the rest I have no doubt we heard from John the other day he has been 15 weeks ill but is a little better now he is at Newcastle and has travelled almost over England and France with a Circus as brother Frederick is in London with George Mile as fishsalesman, Edward and Henry have been out of work a long time your sister Ann is married to Shoemaker and - Alfred is bound Apprentice to him and is getting on

with his trade very well Maryann is in a very bad state of health and James is still at home. When I think my Dear Brother how widely over the World we are separated it seems impossible we can ever meet again the Distance and expence never will be in the power of any of us Still I hope We shall hear from you oftener than we have done your Grandmother Haiseldon is dead and Grandfather is living with Mother he is now getting very old and what is still worse Edward Haiseldon is quite deranged and is now in the madhouse in London with very little hope of his getting better I am sure William you will agree with it has been 10 years of trouble at home but we know it is the Will of God and we must submit to Him Father still keeps in remembrance of you your Tobaccoe box that you gave him and Mother prizes your letters we think you should have sent us a few particulars of our new sister and her name you quite forgot to mention Unless She feels disposed to favour us herself with a letter if so we shall be very glad I must now conclude as I have no better news and hope that you will still enjoy good health in a forigein land Grandfather Father and Mother and all your Brothers and Sisters send their kindest love to you and yours and I hope you will accept the same from Me and My Husband and may the Almighty God ever protect and bless you both in the Sincere prayer of all your family so no more from your Affectionate Sister

Sarah Wood

**Letter submitted by Kerrie Blyth**

This letter was written by John Edmondstone to his step sister Margaret Cooley living in NewTown VDL. John expresses his thanks to Margaret for caring for their brother Robert Edmondstone (a 16 year old who was transported to VDL for theft ) and asks if she has put on mournings for their mother. He includes some poetry and a desire to emigrate with his family.

*122 Rose St,  
Edinburgh  
May 25th, 1842*

*My Dear Brother-in-Law, and my Dear Sister,*

*These lines I send you to let you know that we are all well here, God be thanked, and we earnestly hope they will find you all enjoying that great blessing - health. Once more I must trouble you to know if my Dear Brother is well, where he is, what ship he went to the whale fishing in, if it has arrived at Hobart Town again, and every other particular which you may be able to send us, as I am very anxious to hear of him. In my former letters I stated that if there were an opening, such as you could recommend, we would come out, but as I would wish to hasten one foot before I would slacken another, I should like to know the salary, the hours of attendance, for what term of years I would be engaged. There is not one of us who feels the least grudge to leave our native land if it is to better our prospects in life.*

*Our native land ! it's but a name  
Where pleasure is its worth  
Within our breasts it has no flame  
Save mem'rys bringing forth*

*It once had charms, it now hath none!  
Our youthful days were sweet!  
These were the days that knew no groan  
No pain , nor base deceit*

*But as in years we riper grew  
Our troubles grew apace  
The hours of innocence swift flew  
They had no bidding-place*

So now, no native land have we No home with binding spell;  
From birthplace charms forever free, We care not where we dwell!

Beneath the sun, whatever clime, The same God reigns above;  
He knows no change from fleeting time What can this throne remove?

Thus, with Scotland's God may we Australia's shores proclaim  
The home of life's futurity! Life's fortune and her fame.

*Jean and I are still keeping at a distance from one another, and it is likely it may be some time before we become agreeable, as Jean is ill at giving in, and I being in the right, it need not be expected I will yield. but, so far as I am aware, they are all well and I may venture to send out to you all their best respects and I have no reason to think otherwise.*

*Myself and family send out our kindest love to your whole family, each individual apart. We again sincerely thank you for your kindness to my only brother. We can do no more than send the grateful breathings of true hearts. Our thanks are not the mere words of form, but the deepest trouthings of ardent, anxious souls. We cannot say he is homeless in Australia with such a fireside as yours, if he will but do well. Oh that God would show him the error of his ways. Oh that God would open his eyes that he might see and know his FRL's friends. (Have you put on mournings for our Mother?)*

*FRIENDSHIP!* sweet word of breadth and lengths Of height and depth of love Thy power to man a tower of strength Thy truth is from above. A *FRIEND!* he's foolish who would dare Despise a friend in need Who would with him his plenty share Whose heart for him can bleed. That is a friend! not he who favours With words of honey sweet Whose greedy malice slyly yawns While plotting vile deceit. The one is born of realms of bliss Where Saints delight to dwell The other of that dark abyss The ruined soul's home - Hell!

*We add no more but hope you will answer as soon as possible and we remain your affectionate Friends till death.*

*John Edmondston (Jur?)*

**Letter addressed to**            **Mr Thomas Todd Cooley**  
**Innkeeper**  
**New Town**  
**Hobart Town**  
**Van Diemens Land**

**Letter submitted by Merle Fitzmaurice**

*Mrs. J. Hainsworth,*

*Sheffield,*

*Tasmania.*

*March 26th/23*

*My dear Frances,*

*At long last I take up my pen hoping it finds you as it leaves me etc., but not quite as nthrangn I am so busy now-a-days that I have to spend my Wed. aftn. and Sundays darning and mending, & stitching for the all-important Babs, so that for the home mail I needs must burn up a good deal of midnight oil. But mid-night or no mid-night I am determined not to let another mail pass. As you see I am cutting out the usual apologies. Since I left home I feel to have been like a comet, whirling thru' space. I never was able to pause by the wayside & say how d'y' do. I just had to go on & hope that all my old friends would either remember me kindly or forget me altogether!*

*'Well' now, I am hoping you remembered me kindly or I should never dare to write! but at once let me thank you for the dear little rompers you sent out by Dorothy. It was sweet of you to think of them. I asked Mother to be sure & thankyou for them at the time as I wanted to write you a proper letter when I started. Wouldn't it be lovely if you could see her in them? (Baby, I mean, not Ma!) I am enclosing 'snaps' as next best thing to a sight of her ladyship. I must put one in of*

her prize fighter "Daddy" for it is so comical of both of them. Jack has put on weight here in Sheffield. But everyone does up here. Sheffield is a by-word in Tasmania. Almost too "healthy" in winter! these wood and plaster houses -like living on Hill Top in a band-box.

Well, Dorothy is leaving us in three weeks' time & going to Sydney,, It will be a great change for all of us and you can imagine how much we shall miss her. She has helped me over a big stile coming when she did. And now, if she succeeds in getting a position in Sydney she should have fine time. She has some nice friends there - people she came out on the "Sophocles" with, and then there will be Charlie & his friends. If she doesn't get a job she can always come back, I tell her.

Here, we have found the work too hard for what there is in it tho' it is not so hard since we have regulated things. Jack and I are running it alone now. Dorothy is busy sewing at home & I said I wanted to break myself in. The busy time starts in a week or two when harvesting is over & the football season begins. In case it is anything like when we came here last May, Kindly put in a good word for me when you go to bed at night, (not without seriousness, either!). By the way, tell Auntie Ruth we are ever so glad to have her pie recipes. We shall be trying them out on the foot-ballers before long! As to rabbits! you can catch them anytime in your own back yard. Especially on "a moon-light night. One morning I was just getting breakfast ready when the house fairly lifted from some internal explosions, - we all leaped a foot in the air & squealed. It happened, however that the cause was but a simple innocent little bob-tailed rabbit scampering across the garden path. The front door was open wide, & Jack coming up the corridor from the back of the house just espied it - grabbed a gun from the hat-rack or somewhere & shot it from where he stood - three or four yards inside the door. We thought the roof had gone! He brought the poor thing in. We ate it for lunch.

Life is a very strange thing, isn't it? My word, yes, - I thought so the other day! We gather in all kinds & conditions at our little way-side cafe. Everything from city tourists to "way-backs". The other day it was 'way-backs, people from away back in the bush. Some of them are rich and rare.

This one edged his way across the shop with a sort of side-step shuffle-with a final heave he reached the counter & leaning over confidentially whispered - "Can a bloke get a feed?"

He was just a young fellow - not more than twenty, very rag-tag & bob-tail, - a thin weather-beaten face but with bright shy eyes like a bird's. So that however blunt he was you felt that he meant well. It was just ignorance. Sheffield once in a few months is probably all he sees of civilisation. Try to imagine. I did notice at the door a rather dilapidated-looking girl about 18 - tall & thin like him, her skirt flopping all ways about her ankles. But as she was leaning in the doorway quite outside & not at all interested inside I steered him into the cafe.

When I took in his tray, the dilapidated young woman was sitting at another table & when I looked at her she wedged her chin into her collar-bones & peered out from under her brows, I set his meal & before I could approach the girl he chipped forth - "Bring her the same! Rather startled I turned & fetched her "the same". She still sat apart, No, they hadn't quarrelled. Just sheer awkwardness! He looked at me with a grin as much as to say 'isn't she a fool?'. We laughed rarely about them in the kitchen, deciding they were a raw young couple to be 'keeping company' in civilised parts. However when I went in for payment, I had an awakening, I said to him "two shillings" naturally (for both). He put out one shilling & watched her fumbling with a knotted handkerchief for a minute then dived into the furthestmost recess of his breeches pocket - dug out another shilling & slapped it on the table with a "There you are (to her) - where's you rs, thick-head!" I staggered forth. Methinks the turtledove strikes a new note! The kitchen voted them BROTHER & SISTER. I give it up myself! Life in a tea-shop has its compensations.

Well Frances, how are you all getting on? Is Halifax looking just the same? Not to mention Everett? not to mention your little mother & your father & Auntie Ruth & Bemie? Give them all my love. Is Everett's business developing alright? Mother told me of the move he made some time ago - you can imagine how glad I was to hear.

Give my love to Louie & Harry & the two little sons. Tell them I decided to ring the changes on sons. It was time there was a baby daughter in the family. Tell Louie it looks as if I will never square her a line but to keep her pecker up & not to sub-rent that corner of her heart I once claimed possession of. I hope they are all keeping well. Give my love to Belle Jackson too & her mother & kindest remembrances to her, J & the boys & the (not legible) & Ivy Gladfield & all the old friends at your church.

And do you still have Cuilmans in- Halifax? I suppose you do. Well, next time you go, you & Everett (Sorry, James!) just think of your poor cousin Lillian what hasn't seen a show for a solid twelvemonth! not since we left Devonport. But when you gaze forth into exquisite Western American scenery, craggy mountains, purling streams, waterfalls, or great flowing rivers, - rich billowing plains, tall forests & vivid glittering sunshine then you can reflect that poor cousin Lillian has only to raise her eyes from her writing-pad, glance out of either window of her sitting-room to see all - or nearly all of these things.

So there is compensations wherever you are! Just now, I would quite callously exchange them for a glimpse of Novello's, John Roberts (?) or Brown & Muff's Spring Shows of frocks & millinery I Well you see, it fits both ways, doesn't it? But my word I've seen a-plenty since I left home. Stacks & stacks I that I would not exchange for all the "Spring displays" in all the shops in all the towns in all the countries - that Jack built! So at heart I find myself a very contented person.

But if only you could see the little Dorothy! and if only you could see her proud papa, there never was such a child! dark blue eyes & golden hair - fair, like her Auntie Dorothy. Neither was

there ever such a good baby (either her Auntie or her father or mother will tell you that) to goo and gurgle & laugh & kick all day long. We are all quite agreed that never was such a baby born! her intelligence - a prodigy of intellect not yet five months old.

And that is not all. But I will spare you.

She has by the way a look of Everett when she is lying down. I can't just place it. But sitting up she is most of all like her Daddy. They all join me in lots of love to you all. Dor. will write Auntie Ruth from Sydney. Tell Bernie that the way I get about the cafe with a twin under either arm would be an eye-opener to him. - a broom in one hand & a dust-pan in the other, & a trayful of crockery upon my noble brow! Well now, I must really wind up. Tomorrow morning I shall think of a thousand & one things I intended to mention. If you could just look out of here & see the moon-light.

It is so vivid you could sit out & read a newspaper by it. Never saw anything so wonderful as Tasmania in moonlight.

Well so-long & heaps of love.

Slip over to you and Jim & brighten up my Mum's boring life -  
lovingly Lillian.