

Canterbury St. Moore's Ponds

February 21<sup>st</sup>. 1911

My very dear Lydia,

I ought to have written to you long before this, when you were so good to write to me just on the eve of your daughter's marriage, when I am sure your hands and hands must have been very much occupied - But I have not been at all well this summer, the heat has been very trying, today is very hot, Kathleen has gone to see Mary, so I am alone and sit on to counterpoint very writing; at one time three or four people talking would not have disturbed me, but even they would, we always have a lot to talk about when we have been separated for a few hours, I expect you know that Winnie is in Town, at the same studio for the last ten or eleven years, Kathleen has a touching for a local studio, a lady photographer as she does it - at home I have her company which I would not like to be without, I can <sup>not</sup> get - I sew, I make all our underclothing, generally trimmed with my own crochet, and I knit our woollen singlets, and a few for some of Charlie's children, so I am not idle although I do not do much besides, we have a woman to wash &c. once a week, this is very commonplace, but even little things interest - one another don't they?

I had a letter from Willie yesterday & he said Mary  
would most likely write the next week, you don't know,  
and can scarcely realize how I have always longed  
for letters from England, and although two of my dearest  
ones can write no more, I greatly value the letters of the  
ones who are left— How many many hundreds of people  
are coming here just now, I am afraid many of them  
will be disappointed, it is not what it has been represented  
to be, those who have capital to go on the land, may  
do well, but those seeking other employment will not find  
it— Such an Eldorado, domestic servants are always in  
great demand & can get from ten or twelve shillings a week  
upward— I am a democrat somewhat, but I  
am sorry the labor party is so much in power, I  
don't think it is good for the country—  
Willie has a great wish to see Australia, I should be very  
pleased if he and Theophilus, or any others could  
pay us a visit, it is a wonderful country, and Melbourne  
is a fine city, with suburbs the population is now  
550,000— I would have been glad to see you  
all & my dear old city, but it was too late for me  
to come, but it is not as though we were parted for ever,  
we hope to spend a glorious eternity together, "by  
the Grace of God"— Now let me go back more  
than fifty years, like aged people generally, I seem  
to live some times in the past, Longfellow says  
"let the dead past, bury its dead" but I find pleasure  
and profit too in remembering it— I look back  
to when you were a little girl of six or seven, & Mary Willey  
Mary & my self were young girls (I was the eldest) the many  
happy times we spent at Walnut Terrace & Combe Down  
& Nightingale Cottage on the Gloucester Road—

we felt as much at home as though it was our own,  
your Father & Mother were so kind and good to us,  
giving us all the pleasure they could, & before that  
when we were a few years younger, your dear Father  
would teach us how to make crystallized talcum baskets,  
miniature earthquakes between the two great pear  
trees at Walnut Terrace, which only resulted in a crack  
in the ground, and dye stuffs for our dolls clothes

& I only am left of the three, your Mary has not  
a very happy married life & Meneys was a very short one.  
How dearly your Father loved your Mother and you children,  
it was a great trial to come away & leave you, in his  
pocket book he had written some amusing childish sayings  
of your elder ones, I cannot remember now what they were  
but on the voyage he often looked at them & spoke of them,  
I remember he said one day, 'I believe Lydia has a very  
tender conscience', you know he chose your name as  
the name "of the one whose heart the Lord opened"  
& you were born on his birthday, I always remember  
it on the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month. The boy had come.  
I saw him, we were talking about you all & I stayed  
till it was getting dark & I was tired, your Uncle was  
so busy building the operating room to begin business  
& I promised to come the next evening, but I did not, it  
was not nice for me to be out alone in a strange place  
& your Uncle said we will both go tomorrow, which we  
did, we found he had gone to Sydney that morning,  
he must have decided suddenly for he did not speak  
of it to me, I was so sorry that I did not venture that  
evening, I thought perhaps he may not have gone <sup>if I had</sup> but  
Mr. Davis & Mr. & Mrs. Mackenzie tried to persuade  
him not to go, but it was no good, then when

Mr. Davis called & told us the sad news of his death, he said his luggage will be sold today, I directly said could it be stopped? he said no it will be gone by this time, I was very grieved when some months after my Father wrote "we were sorry you did not stop the sale of the effects your Father had given Mr. Davies power of attorney to act in everything for him you belonged to Mother & was a solicitor, a good man, I met one of his daughters recently, I had not seen her for many years, she said there are so few living who knew my Father, she keeps a school & was having a holiday at Fern Tree Gully, we met at the little Baptist Chapel, 2 1/2 miles away — just as I was busy writing this, a parcel came to the door, two unexpected visitors, Alfred Gortie's eldest son & the one he is going to marry in a month or two, they both live about 300 miles away in New South Wales, had been to Chaa & were on their way back, I had to get afternoon tea & then dinner, I did wish they had written & then Mother would not have been out, however Winnie laid the table when she came home, & we had a pleasant evening, but it just was not a little, I like to & generally do, take things very quietly now — I could have written last night, but I now like to miss the prayer meeting, it is so near — now I must write just a few lines to my good correspondent Willie — I wanted to write about the post card of the wedding group, I can recognise several but I would like to know all of them but I must conclude this hastily it is near posting time, my love to

generally I get your down  
 23<sup>rd</sup> ones I must have very speedily  
 Mother had a vision like this and from the  
 of West Ham, acknowledging the receipt of the two  
 of the two sets of clothing —

Abondale Naribyrong Road Moonee Ponds  
June 11<sup>th</sup>. 1912

My dear Theophilus,

I must begin with asking <sup>you</sup> to excuse me for not answering your most interesting letter of Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>. I feel almost ashamed of the date, as it is so long ago, I really had forgotten that you asked me several questions, until Mary's letter of yesterday reminded me of them, my memory is getting very defective, but I ought to have remembered what you asked me — Now I will lose no more time, but answer your letter in order, as I have it before me, Kathleen is sending you a letter by the same mail, I was very interested to hear all about your business, some your business trials, I can deeply sympathize, for we had many losses & disappointments, we had business good & bad, one particularly in Collins St. Melbourne in 1865, in which we had used a lot of money (our savings for a year or two, during which time your Uncle had part of the time £.4 & part £.6 a week, but his employers failed) and a legacy of £.140 from an Aunt of your Uncle's — I believe we would have done well, had it not been for what they called a dead lock, which it was, a dispute between the two houses of parliament, they voted no supplies & yet for how long, so one from the Prime Minister down to every policeman Justice of Peace, had a penny, except what they had saved or could borrow at high interest; photography being a luxury, of course suffered, we paid every one, but we lost all our money, but I must

not fill my paper, I really could, with one up & down, our  
business in Peabham was good for some few years, until a  
man who began as an errand boy with us, set up a few  
doors away, took photos on Sundays, got of course cricketers  
footballers & did a great business, he is there still, charging  
very ridiculously low prices, but he has a custom car & a fine  
house - when I think they have a good business at high  
prices, but I with you would, through advice, come to  
take it up as a profession, how I wish Charlie had been  
taught something different, but at the time he was growing  
up, our business in Peabham was good & there was plenty to  
do in it, he does very poorly as an out door photographer,  
he & his partner, they get a good order some times, but it  
is very precarious - I do indeed remember the  
beautiful view from Beechen Cliff, but it must be different  
to fifty or more years ago, I remember it as a sort of wood  
with large trees, low side of which a boy lover & cousin of mine  
George Towson carved our initials, when I was about sixteen.  
You are rich in musical instruments, we have only one  
piano, Kathleen is the pianist - I would dearly like to see  
all of them, especially the piano around which we used to  
stand during long years ago, your Mother played, your Father & my  
sister Mary & myself, & some times others - but by & by  
we shall sing 'the new song' & we shall go no more out for ever  
I must put this on my own - The photo, I would like  
you to copy, is one taken of your Uncle before we were  
married, purposely to leave with my Mother, it was I think  
about cabinet size & it was coloured I think, it was taken  
by Newport of Wilton St, the one of whom he learnt photography,  
in your Grandfather's will, it was expressly left to your Mother  
I am very fond of poetry, unless it is too fanciful, &  
I would rather hear a good recitation than singing, unless  
the latter is very good, Kathleen is programme arranger  
for our local Band of Hope - your Uncle John Willing used  
to please us very much when we were young, he recited well  
'the Jackdaw of Rheims' & others I remember, is he still living?  
is he still an Unitarian? I hope so - I must  
send Willie today to 'Argas', we have been suffering from drought  
& some of us have been praying earnestly for rain, as we  
read of the starving sheep & lambs, & the prospect of a  
poor harvest, but the Lord has sent the beautiful rain

and our hearts are filled with thanksgiving, "The Lord hath his own way."

Now I will try to tell you what I know about <sup>my</sup> ancestry, which is not very much, my grandmother died when I was about fourteen, I was sent for to see her before she died, from Miss Elliott's school at Chippewa, I think she was then seventy seven, I remember James Hardy, the portrait painter, eldest son of Mr. Hardy of Hewittia St. who was a Baptist preacher & who often accompanied your grandpa & cousin Seaman in their visits to distant villages - James Hardy who was just a rising artist asked permission to paint my grandmother, as she had such a fine old lady's face - I believe it - was much admired at the time she was considered very much like my father, I remember a gentleman who saw it in the drawing room saying to my father, why were you painted with a shawl & cap on? Father told us of it. I only remember hearing of her mother having lived to be that great age, 102, I think my brother Charles must have been the only one who saw her - my grandmother must have been very good looking, she was called pretty Sally Howard by her girl friends, I know very little of her relations, but I think they must have been in a good position, I remember hearing her speak of an Uncle of my father, I suppose her brother in law, wearing frilled shirts, long black silk stockings, & silver buckles, she must have been a very capable woman, for she was left a widow with two little children & my father was born after his father's death - if there are any more questions, I will answer as well as I can -

Wed. evening - We have just come home from the prayer meeting and I will finish this now, so that Minnie can post it in the morning as she goes to business - I cannot write to Willie this mail, I know he will excuse me when he sees this long letter, will you give him the enclosed cuttings from the 'Argos', he will be very sorry for Mr. Wainwright's loss, please ask Mary to give my love to my brother & I hope to write to him soon, I am so glad she goes to see him

I've been very busy & all the other when I was out & to grandpa & Mary  
I can't do a photo of yourself Minnie  
I'll get them sent them in when for you  
I'll get the others as well.  
I'm very sorry I can't do  
I'll get them sent them in when for you  
I'll get the others as well.

Roundale Maribyrnong Rd. Inverce Ponds  
October 29<sup>th</sup> 1912

My dear nephew,

I write at once to thank you for sending me the photo I asked for, I shall prize it very much; of course it is not very good, I would rather it had been encoloured, and there is no expression in the eyes, Winnie thinks she can improve them before we frame it. You can imagine that I love him very much, to be willing to leave all my dear ones, & come all these thousands of miles. — I do indeed remember the painting of Mr. Porter, I think my Father left it to your Mother also those of my Father & Mother, I think all these were painted by Father's cousin Charles Seaman, who went to America very many years ago, I think it a very nice idea, to make a presentation of it, he was one of the first if not the very first Pastor of the Church, I have often heard my Mother speak very highly of him, she was a young Christian then, and enjoyed his teaching — It always hung between the two windows of the drawing room at Wakefield St. I am afraid I cannot tell you much about our ancestors, as to the occupation of the wealthy uncle his name was either Davis or Atterwood, according as he was related to one side or the other, I fancy he had a large pastry cook's business, I remember my Father saying that he once ate so many cheese cakes, that he could not bear the sight of them for long after — I remember my Grandmother speaking of his silken bachelors on his shoes, long black silk stockings & frilled shirts, which of course sounds very funny now — There was a rich man on my Mother's side, her Father's Brother, whose name was