

Dundas W.A.
14th October 1894

Dear Miss Ray,

Your very welcome epistle of the 5th Sept. just to hand (fancy being nearly six weeks en route). I was just beginning to wonder :- whether my 'last' had miscarried or I had been placed on the forgotten list, when I received your acceptable missive, in which you picture "Maida" its inhabitants and surroundings so graphically ; that I must thank you for what I consider equal to a trip to Hawthorn.

I must really apologise for disappointing you with the photographs. Three months ago I ordered from Adelaide a fresh supply of chemicals which are absolutely necessary for the completion of photos, expecting same in a fortnight unfortunately by some means or other they were delayed til last week when (Arthur informs me by letter) they were shipped on "Verulam" which is due at Esperance tomorrow. Now that I am 160 miles away from the bay and have not yet recovered from a mild attack of the yellow (gold) fever, photography has received little attention.

It seems rather cruel to ask you to wait for six weeks longer but when I explain to you will I hope excuse: - Well I have been retained by the Warden to supervise the construction of the Government Reservoir which is to be built here. This will mean an increase to the capital of our firm and also necessitate my

remaining here for at least six weeks. Should we be favoured by a plentiful rain in the meantime I shall have my photo kit sent up & complete them here, otherwise I must wait.

So you have designated "Larry" your shadow? I am pleased to think he has proved a faithful companion to you. Will you kindly give him my love and tell him I do not approve of him eating your foot?

I had a beautiful little dog (a spaniel) here until last Wednesday, when the poor little fellow died, through eating a poisoned mouse. I cannot describe how keenly I felt his loss. he was a grand companion very old-fashioned and always ready for a lark, he would think nothing of tearing a coat to pieces, hiding one slipper, he would amuse himself by gnawing a candle.

His great fort however was in waking me up, at daylight every morning he would creep in thro the tent, climb noiselessly up to my pillow and then worry me.

Now I feel like the "foreigner" with only the "Caw" of the crows to console me. I am afraid I am drifting into a rather pathetic mood so I will change the subject.

You evidently think that we are not lucky enough to find gold? I am rather surprised to hear that you had not received a full account ere date of writing, but will endeavour to enlighten you: - I was here at Dundas consulting the

the Warden re Reservoir when Sinclair marched in with his specimens (which were very tempting) and applied for what is known as a "Reward claim". I left the Warden's Court and at once began preparing for a midnight elopement. Having secured the horses and a companion, we packed a few necessaries in our pack bags. Everything complete we arranged a secret whistle – on which signal my friend was to bring the horses (which I had tied to a tree about half a mile from our camp in the bush).

Having satisfied ourselves, we loitered from one bunch of miners to the other to hear the latest developments, these men were all greatly excited & were discussing the new find with great energy of course there were among them the "I told you sos" etc etc others who "did not think it worth twopence" and so on, it was very amusing to hear the different opinions, we affected a nonchalant air and thereby disarmed all who were at all suspicious. I forgot to tell you that my movements after leaving the Warden received marked attention from one or two of the old wary miners. Nobody knew exactly where this new find was and they naturally thought I did & and were therefore anxious to accompany me whether I wished or not. However they returned to their various camps satisfied that the race to the new field would not start that night. When the last camp fire was extinguished and the inmates apparently in sweet oblivion, I gave the signal and in half an hour or at 11.30 p m we wended our way silently out of the Dundas camp for "fresh fields and pastures new" We did everything so quietly and stealthily not even speaking above a whisper, that I felt convinced that we were bushrangers.

Well we had nothing to guide us but the tracks of Sinclair's two horses. These were followed easily on the edge of the lake, by the assistance of the moon (it being a beautiful moonlight night) for the first four miles when, they took to the bush they were very difficult to discern, we proceeded as fast as possible under the circumstances it was tedious work; tracking over the stoney ridges now and then lighting a match to see if a stone had been turned over or not. The poor little innocent stone would be picked up and an argument would ensue as to whether the horse or horses had kicked it or not, as we always differed in these little affairs we decided to steer by the stars. In about an hours time we had the pleasure and dismay of knowing that we were bushed so we decided to have a smoke and a couple of hours sleep. Lighting a large fire we unpacked, putting our horses on to a nice green field of grass we prepared for a "nap". After making our mattress of colonial feathers (gum leaves) we sat down and over our pipes we discussed the possibilities of 'sleeping in' in the morning and thus losing our chance on the "horseman". Well we chatted away watching the old gum log burning and the horses quietly feeding. It was a glorious night and as it seems a sin to sleep, we resumed our Journey at 3 a m. Arriving at our destination shortly after sunrise (after losing ourselves and the track about half a dozen times), with the consolation of knowing that we were the first on the field after the discoveries

After breakfasting we looked around us and seeing the prospectors tent, we went over and he kindly showed us the new reef and some beautiful specimens. We then went our own way (as agreed). I, finding a little gold, secured a six acre block but strange to relate in writing the notice out, my memory wandered over to "Maida". Do you remember the night we were discussing names for "Larry"? Well I was in a similar predicament not knowing what to call it (the lease). After choosing quite a host of names I decided to call it "Cachmaca" and just to convince you that there is a little gold in it I am sending you a piece of the quantity I obtained last week. Needless to say Arthur was greatly pleased to hear that we had secured a block. Mr Kilminster is working with the practical miner who is opening the reef up. You must excuse these technical terms they are simply mining phrases & denote the development of the mine.

Arthur has not seen it yet. He has been at the bay ever since our arrival and is working hard to make the Venture a success. I would like him to come up but I do not see how he can do it until one of us goes down.

Unless we have two men on the ground it would be liable to forfeiture, I am attending to the business here, but in a few weeks hope to take a run down to the bay. We brought two beautiful horses here the other day one a dappled grey the other bay in color. I brought them on the strength of it raining but I was disappointed and had to send them to the bay as there is no water here. I have

a pleasant little stroll of six miles every day for water each person is allowed two gallons a day and the stroll thrown in.

The Cockatoo episode must have caused you a great deal of amusement as well as “Larry”. I am glad to hear that you have been enjoying yourself lately but you must not tire too soon, Enjoy yourself while you can I know nothing would please your mater better than seeing you enjoy yourself.

With kind regards to Mrs Ray your brothers & sisters and not forgetting yourself from

Yours Faithfully

Raymond J Sharkey