

Tarrangower October 11th 1858

My Dearest Polly,

Another month has roll'd away since the date of my last letter, and I am still without any tidings of you, the mail which I was anxiously waiting for then has not arriv'd even yet. There are two due now, and from all appearances likely to remain so. What a happy thing it would be if we were independent of Steam ships and all other modes of conveyance, for knowing all about each other, which we should be if we were only together again; but I daresay you will think it is not I [who] ought to complain of being separated; as it was my own act leaving you, consequently I should submit to the pain, and unhappiness which results from my own actions. Such reasoning is right enough in some cases, and if I had been activated by any motive different from that which caused me to leave you, I think I could submit with patience, and believe I richly deserved all I have endured. I do not mean physically but in mind for the hardships and privations of a digger's life I just care nought about, in fact I do not feel them, but you know what Solomon says in the Proverbs "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." I have felt the truth of that sentiment many times but never more so than at present. When disappointed in other matters, I can try something else, or if I cannot obtain what I want I make something else do as a substitute; but I can find nothing to replace what I have lost in your society. I cannot find a second Polly here, or any one that will do as a substitute. I have two particular desires, one or the other is continually in my mind, the first I more ardently wish for, and that is that I was with you in England, the second is that you were with me in Tarrengower [sic]. I would be happy in either case, but cannot see at present how I can effect either. In my last letter I think I told you we had some very good indications of being near Gold, in fact we did get one or two Golden stones, but have not as yet struck anything more. How much I wish I could send you word or rather that I could come myself and tell you that we had had a good crushing and that I was prepar'd then to fulfil all my engagements with you, and make you the wife of a lucky Gold digger. There is much excitement just now in Victoria, about some new diggings at the Fitzroy River in the Port Curtis district, a place about twelve hundred miles to the northward of this, there are many thousands going; I daresay when the mail which leaves here on Friday reaches England it will convey the news in the Colonial papers and perhaps be the cause of many leaving for that port. That Gold has been obtain'd there is certain but nothing extraordinary, certainly not sufficient to justify the Rush that is now taking place. There are such conflicting reports about it, that one scarcely knows what to think of it. The rumour reached Melbourne through Sydney. If any one [sic] you are acquainted with should here[sic] of it, and have any idea of going, I think you would be doing them a real kindness by trying to persuade them to stop where they are, at any rate untill something more certain is known about them. You will see some account of Rush, in the printed sheet which I send with this, what is stated there is all that is known, and that in my opinion is very little. But you would be surprised if you knew the effect upon the mind of the diggers generally, many whom I knew intimately started off last week and several more are going this [week]. And although I would advise any one[sic] at home not to risk going, I must plead guilty to a sort of sneaking wish to be there myself, but I am not at all likely to go. Do not think Polly from this, that I would indulge in a roving life from choice, for I assure you I do wish I was settled, and to be so I would care but little what I had to endure. After leaving you I expected to meet with plenty of hardships, and discomfort and in that I have not been disappointed; but I certainly did not expect they would extend over such a length of time.

What do you think of the view on the Yarra River which I send you, don't you think we should be very happy sitting in the place occupied by the lady and gentleman, enjoying the scene by moonlight. The view was taken not far from Melbourne, but if you were with me I could find a pleasanter spot than that for a stroll. I should enjoy a ramble over some of the Granite Hills in this neighbourhood with you; the scenery would be something quite new to you. I think I mentioned in my last letter of a serious accident happening in the next claim to ours, since that two others have occurred on the Reef, in one case a Blast exploded while being loaded hurting one man very much shattering his hand, and injuring him about the body, his mate was not hurt much. The other case was of part of the wall of a Claim falling down and crushing a poor fellow beneath, breaking several of his ribs, but he is getting about again now.

I trust you received the last letter I sent you, I directed it to London but, as it is so long since the date of the last which I have had from you, and as I do not know whether you are still living there, I intend inclosing [sic] this to my sister for her to forward to you. It is now more than nine months since the date of your last. I often conjecture many things which might have occurred during that time. I feel that I do not deserve a letter, but dear Polly you cannot conceive how pleased I should be to receive one, if it contained only a few lines, for next to seeing you personally the greatest pleasure would be to hear from you. I frequently get out my packet of letters and read over yours, for I often want something to give my spirits a lift. I am afraid you will find some difficulty in reading this letter for I have been hard at work all day striking with a hammer, and my fingers do not feel in just right order for holding a pen; I find I cannot get on with letter writing so well as I used to, I cannot get over them so quick. I have been all night writing this little, it is now between one and two o'clock, my thoughts outstrip my pen now, at one time I could write faster than I could think; I seem to have much more to say, but really I am getting very sleepy. I would finish this tomorrow night, but then I should lose the mail, and I would be very sorry to do that, I have sent to you every month during the year since February, and shall continue to do so, hoping if you do not get all that some will reach you safe, but it is not at all encouraging to write when so many fail to reach their destination.

And now dear Polly in conclusion (for I must give over I cannot keep my eyes open) let me intreat [sic] of you to send me a line or two, it would be a kindness, for it is very painfull [sic] to be so long without any tidings of those who are so dear to one as you are to me. The next time you write will you direct to me at the Post Office Maldon, Victoria, instead of Castlemaine.

If you see any one from Luton who inquires after me remember me to them. Now my dearest may the Almighty bless you, and keep you, and that we may soon, very soon meet again is the earnest wish of

Yours Truly and Affectionately

R Gatward

Oct 13th 1858

PS

I find that the post does not close for the overland Mail until [sic] tomorrow, therefore take this opportunity of adding a few more lines for I think it a pity to send a sheet of paper so many

thousand miles not thouroughly [sic] fill'd. I have heard to day [sic] that the missing have arriv'd. I shall write to the post master at Castlemaine to night [sic] to know if any letters are there for me. I hope there will be some it will be a great disappointment if there are not. Another piece of news I must send you, is, that we have a large Comet blazing away in the heavens here. I am also sorry to say another accident occurred on the Reef yesterday, a blast going off and the stones all hitting a poor fellow on the head. Our Reef is getting a very unfortunate one, there are more accidents happening on that than on all the others on Tarrangower. I suppose it is because there is nothing but powder used, picks, and chisels are of no use, it is the most solid reef in the district. I have just been thinking Polly that you will receive this letter just about Christmas time, how much I wish instead of the letter it was myself that was to come into your possession, what a happy Christmas it would be then. I hope and trust it will be the last which will see us separated. Although I cannot be with you bodily on Christmas-day, my thoughts will all be with you. It is a time which recalls to mind the happiness I enjoy'd while with you at Luton; I shall ever remember those days with feelings of peculiar pleasure.

As I have filled up my paper now, I suppose I must once more say Good Bye. As a last word, let me intreat [sic] you my dear Mary to write soon.

Good Bye, and May God Bless You

R Gatward