

If you write direct to be left at the post office till November 25th 1851 -
called for -

My dear Uncle,

Plenty River, Victoria.

Altho you have never answered my last troublesome scribble to you I have determined not to wait any longer, but to write to you for I certainly may say now that "absence makes the heart grow fonder" for every night I think of you all I long more to see you all again altho I do not for a moment wish to return to England to stay for any length of time altho I certainly shall (please God) return on a visit to dear friends in England before long as I have already had two offers to return as maid to two ladies that are about to return on a visit to their friends in England but they will only give me £16 and that I do not think is quite enough as I do not suppose my passage money would be much for them so I shall not think of returning unless I can 18 or 20 £ and my passage paid but perhaps I may be some time before I return as my Mother does not seem to wish me to return at all and altho I have such a very great wish to visit England once again I sometimes almost give up the thought for as it would be against my dear Mother's wish I feel that I should not be happy. I sincerely wish you could see us all I am certain my dear Uncle you would say we were all very good boys and girls. Girls in particular I say girls because you know I always used to be good and now you know I must praise myself for I am certain if I did not see one else would praise me with the exception of a few flatterers and those I do not wish to receive praises from for I know they would soon cease so believe me dear Uncle I do not intend to listen to them for I can do as I please now and were I to change my state I suppose I should have to change my mind also and that I never could do I must

I have my own way to tell longer, I appear to have so much to tell you that I really do not know what to tell you first. You would scarcely know our dear Mother now if you were to see her. She and my Father both begin to look very old now. Mother is getting quite thin. I think I may say she is quite as happy as she used to be in England. She does not appear to have the least wish to return. She should like this much better than England if all her friends were out here she appears to grieve very much about dear Grandmother and Grandfather's death. If I forget and begin to talk about you or any of Aunt's it often causes her much trouble. So when she thinks that since she saw you she has been deprived of a dear Father and Mother. Oh may I never experience that loss for I certainly think I should never bear to part with my kind ones. But I trust as God is always so kind and merciful to us that He will not deprive us of our only earthly protectors. I really do not know what would have become of us all had it not been for dear Mother and Father. He certainly has been a Father to us all and Oh may God reward him for his kindness and as He has cared for us I pray God will in like manner care for us for while we trust in God I do not fear. But all will be well. We certainly have many things to be thankful for in particular our safe arrival in Victoria after crossing so many troubled seas and above all in His merciful protection over us since we have been landed. I will now begin to tell you where we all are as I flatter myself you would like to hear altho' you have never answered my last letter to you but I conclude it is because you have so much business to attend to. I wish often I could repay you a little for the trouble we have given you but I am certain I shall never be able to do but Oh my dear Uncle I do sincerely hope you will be rewarded with a greater reward than earth can ever afford one that will never cease. I can assure you my dear kind Uncle that it is the wish of us all that as we

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I can never repay you that God will bless you and may you never have
the trouble with others as you have had with our family but
may God bless you all is our daily prayer. Now in the first place
I will tell you my Mother has bought a hundred and sixty acres
of land at a pound an acre, it is not cleared it is all trees
like a wood, only the trees are not quite so close together it is
beautiful land a beautiful black soil, and some of it is a
sharp gravel soil the black soil is like an onion bed it
is beautiful, the stones found about the land are exactly
like red and white marble stones they are beautiful they
are exactly like marble for fireplaces only small about the
size of the size of the flints up Sharps hill it is not all fenced
in yet as John has been busy building the cottage and clearing
a piece about 6 acres for them to grow some wheat for the house
so as not to have to buy all while they are clearing some more
of the ground and fencing the remainder in, the three youngest
children are such good children to work Clement and Edwin
keep the cows and mind the cockatoos and parrots do not
come on the wheat, the cockatoos are very destructive to the
crops here they are as bad as the crows in England. They
have 20 cows and calves and three horses one pig and four
goats that is all the stock at present, you know my Mother
is obliged to "cut her coat according to her cloth" they will I
hope be able to get more bye and bye John has had to work
very hard since they have bought the land he has built the
cottage himself he had no one at all to help him excepting
James Himes, and a young lad to help to do the plough
but now the crop is in they have no one at all excepting
Susan, Clement and Edwin, the cottage is small but beautiful

made one would scarcely believe that John could have been so clever he has done a great part of the fencing and the stock yards too. There is only the house, the kitchen the dairy and 1 bed room at present they are so anxious to get it cleared a little round the house for fear of the bush fires, as the heat here is so great in summer that the grass takes fire and it sometimes runs for forty or fifty miles burning trees houses and cattle as when it once begins all attempts to escape are in vain the fire last summer burned many mothers and children and all the cattle on the stations where the fire raged. I myself saw two gentlemen that the heat of the sun as they were coming down the bush set fire to their coats they had on their backs so from that I leave you to guess how powerful the sun is here, the fire last summer got over the rivers so you see even water will not stay it rages it is only he whose voice the wind and seas obey that can still it rage. our cottage is on the top of a beautiful hill in fact they are all hills in the bush and some so tremendous steep we have five or six hills on our land all of them steeper than Bill hill I expect you will scarcely believe it when I tell you the horses do not appear to take the least notice of the steep hills, at the bottom of our hill runs the river Plenty. I wish I could describe it to you but I intend to write to dear Fanny and I will tell her how splendid the bush is as well as I can and then if you wish I am certain she will let you see it and will you dear Uncle please oblige me by letting her see that as my time is so very precious that I cannot spare time to tell her anything that I tell

you. I forgot to tell you my Mother has 4 turkeys, 3 geese, 20 hens
I have now told you all the stock she is possessed of I think
they chiefly work bullocks here but Mother cannot agree to them
being the best so she works horses I myself think bullocks
are stupid things, cows are very cheap here Mother gave only
10 shillings for one it is a pretty good cow too the general price
I think does not exceed 2 £ we have not any sheep at present
they are waiting until they have fenced the land all in as
sheep would be such troublesome things to loose in the ranges
Wheat is 10 per bushel and potatoes are 6/6 this is indeed
a fine country for a large family like ours any one may
do well if they try at all, hay is £ 3 per ton John has
been home with Mother since my father has been out here
he left his place at service to get some land for Mother
and he does not intend going out to service again as Mother
could not afford to pay a man and they could not do all
themselves in fact John and Mother claim the land they
do not intend to give it up to Father for he appears as
thoughtless as ever altho he does not seem inclined to drink
at all he still thinks about doing things without the
money and that is so different to Mother for she will
not even buy a pound of tea without she has the money
ready to pay for it. I am pleased to say all the children
do all they can to help her they all have a few pounds
in the Bank but since Mother has bought the land they
have took it out to give her as every pound now is at

precious as two used to be I only wish we could help her down
I am sure if any of them could they would, but if they have
luck to get their little harvest in I hope then they will get
in better I am certainly in great hopes that better days are
yet in store for them, nothing on earth would delight me so
much as seeing my dear Mother comfortably situated once
again but until she is I can never be quite happy John
is now at the diggings and James Leivers and should they
be so prosperous as to find a good quantity of Gold which
I hope they will we shall be as it were "lauded again" We
have not had a letter from John yet but are expecting one
daily. I read an account that a gentleman I know in
Melbourne had the first shovel full, found a piece of solid
gold the size of a ducks egg whereas three other geats that
were with him only found 1 or three grains and Doctor Barker
one of the party did not find any at all, so it is all chance
I have seen some of it the stone it is found in is exactly
the same as the marble in our land in fact it is thought
that the plenty all along abounds in gold it is on the
plenty one of the places they are finding so much they are
finding it in many parts of the country it is thought that
Victoria abounds in Gold, "now what do you think of our
emigrating to this gold region, every one has left town to go
to the diggings there is not a man or boy to be seen in
town even the gents at the Bank are "off to the diggings" such
an uproar never was known in the colony before not a
ship can leave the bay for as soon as the ships get in port
sailers away to the gold mines go where you will you cannot



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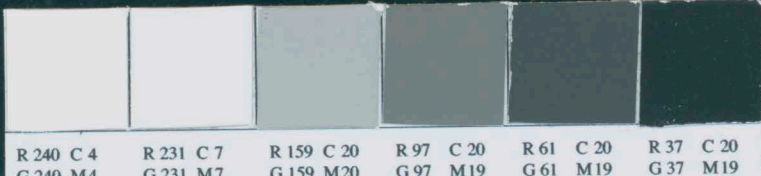
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see a man unless it is an old man like my Father the papers
are full of shops to let on account of the owners going to the ^{digging}
they are on exactly the same flight at Sydney they are finding
gold all over the country it seems to have raised some of the
poor faint hearted English cakes now they have heard of Gold
being found in quantities in Victoria they can raise courage
enough to come out by ship loads, but even now I could not
persuade any one to come all I can say is that the parents
of large families are complete soft cakes to remain in England
when once they hear of a country that any one must do well
in. if I were only a young man would not I go gold digging
and even now I feel half inclined to drop my man's clothes
and go I am certain if I could not dig I could rock the
saddle only I should be afraid they would know I was
not a man as I should not like to part with my curls
for that you know Uncle would spoil my beauty would it
not and that certainly would be a great pity surely Uncle
as you are so rich and now as steam is from England to Australia
you could come on a visit to our splendid country I am
certain you would not regret and surely dear Aunt could
manage the farm for one twelvemonth see how many Gluts
go backwards and forwards I wish you would I fancy I see
you coming up the bay I am certain I could not wait
till you reached the wharf if I knew what ship you
were coming in, but alas I fear I shall never have that pleasure
if I could see you and dear Elizabeth and Nathaniel over the

I don't then give up all thoughts of returning to England. I am afraid
I shall not have room to tell you more for as the writing
back I fear you would never read it at all if I crop it so
I must tell Elizabeth the other rubbish I can think of and
please Uncle forgive me if you cannot excuse this for I am in such
haste. I am home for a month's holidays so if I can get time I will
write to Aunt Sarah. Mother wished me to say how very much obliged
she was to you for your past kindness to her and it is her constant
prayer that God will reward you, as it will never be in her power
to repay you, and for my own part dear Uncle if I could I would
make you possessor of every thing you wish for your path should
be strewn with all pleasures and sorrow should be far from you.
Mother joins with me in a thousand loves to you all but above
all do not my dear Uncle forget Aunt Sarah for my dear Mother
is continually talking about her. I do not know how you will
divide the loves for it was Mother's wish to send so many
I suppose she was afraid you would forget some of our dear
friends at a distance from you such as Aunt Lamborne and
Aunt and Uncle and Cousins Scotts oh I do so wish I could
see you all, do dear Uncle come and see us. If you would promise
to come I would go and dig some gold for you if I lost every
thing else. I see from the English papers that you have had a
great uproar caused by the Exhibition in London. I saw the
picture of the Crystal Palace in the Illustrated London News it
must have been a splendid sight did you see it Uncle, do
Uncle please write to me. I must now bid adieu with all our united
loves to yourself dear Aunt and all hoping you are all well and
believe me ever, Your loving and affectionate niece, W. Reeves



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