

Lonely Grave - Thomas Whyte - Letter 1

6 Collins Street
Melbourne,
Port Phillip
New South Wales

September 30th, 1850
Miss Jessie and Mr Robert Whyte Jnr
Edinburgh

My dear children,

I arrived here last Monday all safe, well and happy, after a most delightful voyage of three months and a half. I had written a very lengthened account of the voyage, but as this is to go by the Overland Mail, I shall send it to you next time when you will hear of all the different sights and events that happened on my way. I shall write you very often and hope you will write me of all that happens to you, how you are getting on in your education, who are your companions and everything else that interests you. In future I will write to each of you separately but as this is merely a few lines to tell you of my safe arrival I will not enter into particulars now.

The place where I have come is a most beautiful place, the kindest of people, the finest climate and everything to make anyone happy. The vine and orange grow in the open air and some bending over the cottage windows. Parrots and cockatoos hop about and chatter to each other like human beings. Goats feed about the streets like dogs at home and everything in nature is pleasing.

The natives in the bush a few miles from town are seen in the wild state of former times, with their kangaroo skin thrown over their shoulders and nothing else, their spears and boomerang with which they hunt their game, they are very picturesque.

Everything here is in plenty, no want, no beggars, no starving, the best if butcher meat one penny per pound and everything else in proportion – everyone appears to be happy and pleased and doing well.

I have got a nice shop in the best part of the town which I enter tomorrow where I hope to do well and make money that I may be enabled at the time that I promised to come and see you – for my heart's desire is for your good and to see you again with me as in olden times is what I will strive for; there is every prospect of doing well here, and when I write you I shall always tell you my wish and intentions. I parted from you both very shortly in Edinburgh but I hope the next time we meet we part no more in life, for we will be together again and be very happy. My dear, dear children my heart is completely bound up in you and I sincerely trust that we may all be spared to meet again in health and strength and be united in our happiness. I am far from you but I remember you nightly at the throne of grace and hope, young as you are, you will do the same for me; we can all

meet there daily, however far parted we are. I sincerely trust you have both been in the best of health and that you are doing all that lies in each of your powers for your future advancement in life.

I was at a school yesterday where they were all Scotch children, John Knox's School in Australia and when they sang together I thought of you both and wished you beside me. It was strange so many Scotch children so far from home and all the same as if they were in Edinburgh. There is about four thousand Scotch and some of them the best people, so there is no want of society here.

I shall write to you at much greater length next time, as I have now merely time to get the mail at present. Your letters you will give to your aunts in Edinburgh, or sent them to your uncle in London direct and he will send them to me; and do not delay writing until you hear from me but always try and write me once a month and I will do the same from here, telling me all your little matters and everything that concerns you for that to me will be most interesting.

Now I cannot add more at present, I am looking earnestly for the first letters from you, and hope very soon to receive them.

That God may watch over you, and keep you, shielding you from every danger and delivering you out of every trouble is the earnest prayer of your

affectionate father

Thos. Whyte.

(Both children were boarders at their schools, Father (Robert) at George Watson's, and Auntie (Jessie) at Merchant Company's School – I do not know the exact title of it. They used to go to their grandmother's house, where their aunts were, on Saturday, perhaps for the weekend, or till Sunday night. Their mother, my grandmother, Thomas's wife Jessie, must I think have stayed on a while in Birmingham, their married home, where father (Robert) was born.

J.D.W.