

# Lonely Grave - Thomas Whyte - Letter 2

Melbourne  
6 Collins Street

November 12, 1850

Misses Whyte  
10 Armiston Place  
Newington  
Edinburgh

My dear sisters,

I wrote to Robert of my arrival aout six weeks ago which I suppose you have heard of – I had a most delightful passage and enjoyed myself on the ocean very much – had the best of health all the time and landed here safe and comfortable. I have now been about six weeks here and like the place very much – the people have none of that stiffness and coldness of the old country about them, but all being so far away from home they have a warm feeling towards each othere and are being free and hospitable to a great extent. Every kind of provision being so cheap, people think nothing of entertaining each other and out of town in the bush things are carried on in quite the primitive style – you might fancy yourself in the patriarchal age everyone is glad to to entertain strangers. I am well pleased indeed with Melbourne, quite a different place from what I thought it would be, everything civilised, the shops do not disgrace London and the public buildings you have samples of in the letters which I send you all and you must say they are first rate. No doubt there are many things rather ruff, but still it is a most surprising place in the manner in which it has got on. I take long walks every morning and as soon as you are outside the town then you see nature in its pure style. Parrots of all sorts chatter away on the trees and there is one kind they call the laughing jackass that you can scarcely tell from the voice of a human being, it roars and laughs as soon as any one appears and then the others chatter to it. The magpie is the most celebrated bird for talking here – they go about tame; my back yard joins a neighbour's and are often three or four of them chattering away together when I go out.

Everybody has got goats here and the large cockatoos of all colours, perched on poles at lots of the doors in the street. The wagons and carts are all drawn by oxen and when they come down from the country with the wool there will sometimes be twenty teams following each other, each having twelve or fourteen bullocks pulling them along – the bullock drivers with their blue frocks and big straw hats shouting their strange cries, with the tinkling of the bullock bells hung around the yoke – a few natives with their opossum skins pinned around them, their black curly hair, with a whole host of dogs at their heels, make the scene rather picturesque to one who has lately left Cornhill and Cheapside.

But mind, altho' there are many things ruff, still there is a strong struggle going on for civilisation and improvement. There are more churches and scientific institutions with literary reunions than is to be found in any town in England for the same population. People are dressed in the latest style of fashion and you will see more well dressed people in church than is to be seen anywhere at home.

It is a splendid place this for the working people; ordinary tradesmen like carpenters and masons get two guineas a week, and shepherds and bullock drivers their board and lodgings and thirty pounds a year. No-one need starve here and there is full employment for everyone one that likes to work and every one does well, it is one of the most thriving places in the world.

I have been very comfortable since I arrived here and although I am living rather ruff and in thorough bachelor style I get on very well. Everybody is kind and free and I go a -visiting every night after shop shutting if I choose. I have no lack of acquaintances and that of the best sort. It is beginning now to be awful hot and for a few hours in the middle of the day it is actually roasting, when I am writing this the thermometer in my window is 135 degrees, but you have no idea of what this heat is in England.

I hope my Jessie and Robert still come to spend Saturday with you and I have no doubt you will all be kind to them till I come back, when I shall not forget you. A few years soon pass by and when I return I shall tell you all my travels and spend some happy weeks with you.

I have had two letters from Jessie and I sincerely hope that nothing will ever occur again to mar the friendly feeling that used to exist amongst us all. We will all be happy and in future years obliterate by our domestic happiness all past conduct. I know your warm hearts and ask them for Jessie, she must be dull and lonely at times, and melancholy thoughts must sometimes come, but you will do all you can I am sure for my sake to make her happy and cheer her spirits till I come back.

Wishing you every blessing and hope you will each write to me a long letter with all the news of the family and all that is going on.

I am

Your affectionate brother

Thomas

In the hurry of posting my last letter this was left out. I hope you will excuse my neglect this time. Thos.