

24/087
Sanderson Terrace

Sanderson St. East Melbourne

3 August 1874

Dear Clark,

I was sitting in the dingy parlour of my humble lodgings, ill in body & sorely exercised in the spirit, brooding over my unlucky fortunes, - with the threatening aspect of which the gloomy stormy weather out-of-doors was in perfect unison, - when the door-bell resounded to the well known ting-a-ting-ting, & your welcome ^(M.L.) letter, together with the equally welcome ^(M.L.) card, was handed to me. Ten minutes have scarcely intervened between the receipt of that letter & my sitting down to reply to it. First of all, forgive me, dear "Father", for anything that seemed like peevish petulance on my part, at your silence; but I have been so wretched, at intervals, that I suppose I was over sensitive to anything that seemed like neglect, & by you especially I should be very sorry to be forgotten. Not for one moment did I under-estimate the ties upon your time & attention, but still, both Hilton & Joey having written, I wished to have a line from the foremost of The Bilateral, as a kind of testimonial, as it were, addressed to my better-self.

Quite sick & tired of speaking about my plans & prospects, (if such there be) & almost inclined to relinquish the seemingly endless ~~sent~~ search after that tantalizing Hill-o'-the-Wisp, Prosperity, - I shall omit that subject altogether from this letter & confine myself to other ^{details} ~~unimportant~~. Hilton, however, will tell you all about me, for I have written to him at length. I have tested his friendship for me severely, but he has been equal to the strain & I cannot be too grateful to him. He, Joey, & now lastly yourself have written to me, each in character^{istic} vein, & you cannot tell how comforting it is to me to know, that, altho' far away, I am not forgotten by

the 3 whose affection & respect I most prize. Sincerely do I hope, and I am induced to continue to hope by the kind tone that pervades your letter, that I am still numbered in the ranks of the "children". One thing & one only, makes me waver in this hope. Speaking of Ben you say "Alas, he is not the first, & I suppose he will not be the last, to grow tired of "me". If there be any covert allusion in this sentence to myself, I swear to you, with all the sincerity of which I am capable, that you wrong me. Perhaps no one knows better than yourself (or myself) all the faults of my weak, unstable & frivolous nature, but still, if there is any virtue (& I esteem it such) which I possess, pure and undimmed, it is Friendship; and I know hardly any one who has greater claims on my gratitude & respect ^{than yourself}. I say this from my heart, not with any intention to flatter or compliment, & wish to discharge a duty ^{to myself} I have now long owed. If I ^{have} ever by coarse or careless word done ought to hurt your feelings, the "inward monitor" has never ceased to reproach me. ~~By~~ By this apology for any such misconduct, I already feel much "relieved - now" to "fresh woods &"

I am eager to shew, by some patent act, my strong warmest sympathy with yr "Quads" & shall not rest until you shew me how I can do so ⁱⁿ my new sphere - I have already told J. W. to vain effect, but; in case of his forgetting it, I repeat the ~~wish~~ wish to you - My sister is well known in literary circles over here & has much influence in that quarter - She has read all the "Quads", is in raptures with W's poetry & the "Window", & ^(the Quads) like myself, would do anything to directly or indirectly advance its spread - She herself (in my opinion) writes very well - I had an interview with the Ed. of the "Australasian" not long back respecting some poetry of hers - He praised it highly & it will appear shortly - when it does I will send it you, & wish your candid & critical opinion on it - We are jointly engaged on other literary work just now, - of which more hereafter.

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In a recent long conversation with J.G.H., I unfolded to him my wish to appear amongst the writers to the "Quad", explained how I thought my legal education had kept me uneducated in the themes, moral, social & political, of the day, but that I hoped by dint of hard work, ^{& deeper thinking} to yet attain to that dignity. The wretched drudgery of my office life in Holt Lion being now numbered amongst the things that were, & my "home" here being more happy & the temptations ~~to~~ to stay being "nil", I hope, with some degree of confidence, to yet realize my wish. Of this, too, more anon.

Milton led me to suppose ~~when~~ I left that he would forward me his photo - you & he both know how I should cherish it - & now I learn from Joey that he wishes to sneak out of his promise on the ground of its being "toucherish". Please reason with the misguided young man, & when I remind you that you have yourself made me a similar promise ^{that} I ~~will~~ coupled with the earlier part of this (or) that the ~~two~~ will be sufficient - I think ^{the} two ought to be taken in a group.

There is one fault in your life. You do not speak enough of yourself - I wish to know all your doings & especially about your legal studies - (i. B. - You could get any law books more cheaply thro' me than by any other source) You must not become an editor alone - & remember ~~how~~ your articles have now been running 2 1/2 years. Tell me, too, all about it & arms ^{the} office work ^{& Johns} Of course you will discreetly veil my ^{present} want of success from all but the "children".

I have asked Milton for his speech ⁱⁿ on the Great debate - Could I have yours also? They wd. both be returned.

My life over here wd. be a very happy one, if the future wd. only brighten - I read nearly all day in the Public library & in ev'g repeat same performance - or write bits. We rarely go down town & needless to say, I live with the greatest parsimony - I can weather any I may if necessary -

As you have visited Melbourne, I need not describe it; & any picture
I might draw of ~~the~~ it, would only take the color of my
generally dismal thoughts. Suffice to say I like it better every day.
My last home, you know, was an unhappy one & I feel that
(except in a bodily sense), ^{for lately I have been very unwell} the change has done me good, making
me more cautious, independent & self reliant. My present want
of success has, I candidly admit, astonished me, but one reason
^{for it} I can see clearly - All ^{my} ~~the~~ testimonials describe me as being a
Globe etc. The firms over here fight very shy both of professional
men in fact & article clerks. In fact, one very flourishing
Sole, in whose office there was a vacancy, told me frankly
that this was the sole reason of his refusing me the billet.
This is the more provoking as the salary annexed to such
an office or situation ranges from £300 to £520 per ann. and,
Oh "Father", I could cause so much happiness & do so much
good on even the lesser ~~hope sum~~! However I take the
advice "the Trio" have given me & "hope on", often comforting
myself with the lines: - "For toil shall victory crown & Peace attend"
You know the rest. Thanks, too, for your own kind exhortation.

Regard for my readers' feeling & not lack of ideas or
views - make me conclude that I must first entreat of you not
to knock yourself up by over-work or anxiety, if it can possibly
be managed by your energetic temperament. Knowing too the
many duties that engross your time, I neither request nor
expect a speedy answer, but hoping to hear from you, when
you do write, at length, I wind up ~~it~~ with the hope that
the long list of your ^{friends} warm admirers may be settled
by the name of

Your faithful & affectionate friend

W. Hill

Especially the C. P. Seton

P.S. Please ask Nelson to send ^{me} ~~my~~ all my Books, papers etc, & not to bother
abt. Quad No. 1; it has arrived. I forgot to mention that I am,
in addition to law reading, busily engaged in preparing for the Matriculation
Examination, of which they think a good deal over here. Much to my
surprise, I learnt that our A.T. degree is not in any way a ~~valid~~
substitute for either the Matriculation or the Civil Service Examinations.