

2nd St. Vincent Place S.
S. Melbourne
6th Aug 1884.

My dear Andrew

I was reminded by a passage in a late letter from you to Walter that I owed you a letter. In this matters time flies by very quickly, and at the time I was not sure who had written ^{last} although, of course, I do not, nor do I suppose, are you, affected by such a consideration.

You will pardon my referring to the weather. July has been a right mournful month. The Doon of Manchester said he came out to get a look at the sun. He was not much gratified last month. Headen skies and frost laden north winds have overhung and traversed Melbourne for 6 weeks past, and I am sensibly more cheerful since August has opened with a breath of Spring, and Australia is once more commencing to justify Lord Rosebery's phrase for her - "the radiant continent". I am big on the nobility in this paragraph, but don't be alarmed; my democratic principles have not by any means weakened since I have been in Victoria - Au contraire.

How much better ^{than} than it can I.
win my increased cheerfulness to a
purpose than by writing to you, my
dear old Padre? I do not know. And
so it is I ~~sat~~ sit down to write with
a trembling consciousness that I may be
but little able to infuse into this pen
and ink and paper what my heart
would fain express.

I am glad to inform you that
my physical health is good, save a cold
which has harassed me off and on for
some months. This bothers me much at
times but I have no positive illness from
it. My mental state is also good, although
there has been a much greater strain on
me this year than last. The work is
heavier at the office - I have to do a
regular allowance of chess work (some)
paid for and some not - and I am
reading as much as social engagements
will permit. Walter with his usual kindness
has offered to read literature and law with
me and I am about to settle a programme
which I shall, with his help, try to follow up.

It may interest you to learn that the Victorian Chess & Draughts Club, in the foundation of which I took part, is in a very flourishing condition, numbering about 50 members, and rapidly becoming the chess resort of Melbourne. There is a handicap tourney going on at present in which Simpson & I are at scratch. Notwithstanding a heavy handicap I have preserved the leading position up to the present. The Melbourne Chess Club is in a moribund condition, and they are now using every endeavor to induce our Club to amalgamate with theirs, preserving the name of the Melbourne Chess Club. There is likely to be a fight over this presently, but I feel pretty certain that our Club will decide to keep its autonomy. While on the subject of Chess I may mention that I am in negotiation with Walter Franklin of the "Federal Australian" to start a Chess column in that journal - I expect a favorable answer this week, and I shall endeavor to get a couple of guineas a week for the work at least. So much for the Royal Game.

On Wednesday evening 30th July a social meeting was held in a large room of the Co-operative Society in Collins St E. G. L. Turner filled the chair. The object of the meeting was to welcome Mr Waeters and bid farewell & make a presentation to Mrs Webster on her retirement from her ministry. I went with G. L. to this meeting. I may mention that the latter has got very thick with Mrs Webster and works with her in regard to the Australian Health Society & also the "Women's Rights Association" - the "Screaming Sisterhood" as the worthy Mr Lloyd used to dub them. About 300 people were present. From 7 to 8 o'clock was spent in general buzzing. At 8 o'clock Turner opened the ball with a short address in which he briefly touched upon the quarter of a century of Unitarianism in Melbourne, & wound up by welcoming Waeters. The latter then addressed the meeting. Waeters is about my age, with rather a youthful look about him. He has a pretty fair head. The most peculiar appearance about his face is the under lip which shoots forward prominently. He has a good voice & clear style & conveys the notion of being sincere & sympathetic. I was not introduced to him before this evening. Mrs W introduced me as being one of a small

nucleus in Tasmania whose creed was in accord with Rational Christianity. I was also introduced to Mrs Walters. The latter considerably surprised me. Imagine a lady above the average height, almost as broad as she is long, with no suspicion of a neck & two well defined chins. Altogether one who might exclaim with the liver-disordered Dane,

"Oh that this too, too, solid flesh would melt"
As becomes a corpulent person she appears agreeable and good humored, and short winded; and her beaming eyes are vivacious enough. When she put her hand in mine, on introduction, it was such a great soft wonder that I was almost tempted to squeeze it; - but I didn't, I'm glad to say. It wouldn't do to start the new ministration with a scandal. Mrs Hand so respectfully requested not to laugh at all this. Well, - where were we? Oh! ah! - Dr Walters addressed the meeting. Among other things he said somebody in Scotland had recommended him to the Unitarian Committee here as a "go ahead" man; that they must recollect they had taken him on this; so that if, in the course of his ministry he, in many matters of usage departed from the order & conservative side of Unitarianism,

he must plead the recommendation on which they
accepted him as his justification. He alluded
to the innovations he had introduced into
the Church service as an evidence of the
tendency of his thought. I may say, par
parenthèse, that I had noticed this. He has
set himself to abolish all the expressions around
which cluster the dogmas of popular Christianity.
In pursuance of this idea he has determined to
knock out most of the hymns that appear
in the present book in use in the Church.
I am quite in sympathy with this movement.
Songs & recitations succeeded this address, &
then a presentation was made to me Weber
in the shape of a travelling bag accompanied
by a very flattering and cordial address. Mr. W.
replied with great self-possession & in very good
terms, winding up with a quotation from old
Worcester where he does some shovel work or
something for a feeble old man: —

"I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With covetous still returning,
Alas! the gratitude of men
Goes oftener left me mourning."

I was surprised when in conversation with the ex. Puestees on the way to the Railway Station to find she misapprehended the meaning of the last line. I said to her "I presume you meant it to be I mean that the gratitude & praise accorded made you sad in one way because you felt that your work had been far below in worth what you could have wished it to be to merit such expressions" To this pretty speech she said "Yes" It was while talking further of the lines that I happened to say the meaning apparently was that the effusive gratitude of the old man for the simple service rendered him made the poet sad because he reflected how comparatively rare acts of kindness were when they could evoke a gratitude in which appeared to lurk a surprise that the service had been rendered. She said the lines had not conveyed this meaning to her, but that this apparently was the one intended. Mrs Webster informs me her departure for England will take place at the end of the year, and she would be very glad to see you before she goes.

It may not be out of place here to
make some comments on the figure Mr
Walters cuts in the pulpit. He has a
pleasing appearance & a strong clear articulation.
His mental acquirements are displayed in a
somewhat peculiar fashion. In conversation one
evening I hit him off as "The Rev. Dr
Inverted Commas". To my mind a great
defect in his addresses is the persistent use
he makes of quotation. He is quite catholic
in the sources he appeals to - other Christian
theologies, poetry by the bushel, novels, paganism,
Buddhism, Confucianism, Science, & above all,
he can introduce a comic story in good
style. Now, all this is very good; but it is not
good when he drenches his discourse with
long pagan stories & endless poetic quotations.
One of his addresses was nearly all Pygmalion
& Galatea; & when he gets on to Poetry he
rips out stanza after stanza with terrific
prodigality; & worst of all, he trots out all
the old sayers; & I feel sometimes as I
used to feel when a fossil pen smote my
long suffering tympanum. There is one point,
however, on which he warms me. He evidently

leans a good deal to the doctrine that the comic
is the divine" - It is quite refreshing to hear a
gentle rattle go round the Church at one of
his sallies, & I feel inclined to chip in
with some applause. I maintain (a la Joe
Kisby) that when a man handles the humorous
venn well, on subjects that times when your
ordinary cuss would never dare to touch it,
it is a good sign, & argues well for the breadth
of his humanity. Why, even some of those
sorey sermons droned out in the orthodox
pulpit, would be bearable if they had some
of the gentle glow of humor & the pure sparkle
of wit, both of which assuredly derive
their luminousness from "the light which shall
never was on sea or land" - Don't think
that Walter is always reaching for the
cup and bells. I think he is an earnest
man; and that he meets with great favor
from the cream of the Unitarian congregation
is a fact more convincing than my praise or blame
when I next write I may write ^{hold forth} to you again
on this subject.

Need I say how glad I was that

the 4th of July last was marked with
another red letter. Both Walter & myself are
proud to think we contributed a little to the
success of the meeting. I was busy on the 4th
& did not go to the American Consul's reception.
It in truth, it is a dull business at the best.
I know none of them, & to listen to a few
formal words, and swing some champagne,
and then to go off into the unheeding
crowds of the street, is depressing. Sufficient
to say I saw the Slavery Banner waving
over the towers of Collins St & what I
felt then could not be appeased by official
formalities. I feel something like Motley
must have done ^{in Germany} when in default of anybody
else to unburden himself to ^{in Germany} he
shouted out through the doorway to his
sleeping infant "Richmond is taken".

I must end this long wounded epistle
now, begging you "to commend me to your
honorable wife" and to bestow some osculatory
favours on the children as from "Buddler Joe".
Unchanged regards to Willie, Bobbie & Lucy -
Tell Bobbie to write. General remembrances to Minnie's
Club, and lastly accept for yourself dear Patrie
pl. many thanks for Boston papers. the affectionate regards & remembrances
of A. L. Weston

P.S. Number Wooly,

I have not yet read Comwaj's book on Emerson which you have twice referred to and enjoined me to read. I have not forgotten it, however. I got the essays by Curtis and read them with much enjoyment. It appears that you think "Chateau d'Espagne" more fitted for Walter than me. but I have to try and possess myself of some of these seductive residences, nevertheless. I will not forget to look after Rosmini.

Tell Director I received his letter with much pleasure, and am glad he has not quite forgotten me.

Miss Ababel Ross called on me at the office last Saturday. She got my address from Walter. She looks well, and tells me she is going over at Xmas. of course, she says I must come over.

By the bye has Silvatore turned up in Hobart. Interested myself with the Consul General here to assist him back to Tasmania. Poor Silvatore got fearfully hard up here;

of I was glad I moved successfully in
his behalf, The Consul General for Italy
is the Marquis of de Goyzueta. It appears
the "Marquis" took a bit of a fancy to me
& sent an invitation, through Silvalore for me
to come and see him whenever I liked.
Silvalore tells me he ~~is~~ is a thorough believer
in Mazzini & the Republic, and has little
regard for titles - As I understand he is
meant I may be tempted to beat
him up as the Marquis is willing.
The Italians have just established a club
here; and the French have a very strong
one at the Cathedral Hotel where our
Chess Club meets.

Addio

[Signature]

P. S. to Bly. We are to be pitted - The
Small Fox has broken out in the heart

of Melbourne not far from our office
I send a photo of "Balmoral Terrace" which may interest you.
Some of the lodgers are paraded - The first to the left on the top is
Mr. Grew a Scotch Mining Surveyor, then your friend Mr. Wooding his cat
"Shop" - then Giles a Contractor, down below the bath figures leaning
with his hands in his pockets is Captain Beeston late of the Indian Army
and next to him Westhope a young Englishman lately out from home.
D.W.