

Melbourne

17th May 1883

My dear Andrew

I was very glad to receive your letter and to hear that you were all well. I at once saw about the book "Studies in Philosophy ancient and Modern" by Courtney. Walter it seems had not neglected the matter, but could not obtain the book. I instituted enquiries on my own hook both at Mullens' and Robertson's and definitely ascertained that they had not got and never had the book. I will enquire again by and by and let you know if successful.

Monday last being Whitsunday, was observed as a holiday in the school offices, Banks and law offices, and I took the opportunity of going down to Geelong in one of Howard Smith's boats the "Excelsior". There were about 300 people on board and I enjoyed the trip very much.

I feel more at home in Geelong than I have been since I have been in Victoria. It was nice and lethargic, dreaming away by the bright waters of the Bay, and afforded a happy contrast to this Melbourne where "the world is too much with us" (another check for the old man!!). The time at my disposal was limited, but with the assistance of a young fellow stopping at the Tavern, who knew something of the place, I did the principal points of interest ~~at the place~~ - standing on the rise of the hill at the top of Moorabool St (the Bourke St of Geelong) in the vicinity of the Grammar School, an admirable building embosomed in English and native trees and shrubs, one sees the broad waters of the Bay bordered by misty shores and promontories with the "You know" bluely outlined in the distance. All round in the opposite <sup>direction</sup> sketch the vast plains sprinkled with clusters of trees and dwellings and farmhouses till they melt away in

the horizon with the River Barwon  
winding on to the South. How infinitely  
calm it all looked! How the soft  
wind blowing up from the sea  
seemed to whisper to me so hopefully  
and joyously and encouragingly! - For  
did it not come from where my  
thoughts are so often turned, and  
breathe to me (or so I fancied) that  
it knew of my land and loves  
and dreams and that for all  
my imperfections and weaknesses  
I was not yet scolded from noble  
friendship and sympathy - These  
thoughts were with me, too, as  
I sat alone in the stern of the  
vessel on a coil of rope as we  
were coming back - A rich sunset  
burned over the western plains  
and delicately tinged the long foam-  
back of the steamer while a number  
of white seabirds delicately poised  
in the beautiful air kept steadily  
flying in our wake within a few  
yards of me - This was the first  
good day-dream I have had, and  
when we entered the sinuous Yarra  
with its ditchy shores and Malabergian  
smells and Melbourne feared into  
giggle, it tore myself from it with regret.  
(Here sentiment? Well, yes, O worldly-wise  
critic, but he do worry I write, <sup>now</sup> knows more cheerfully  
I can trust my pen.)

I passed the Bookshop of Willie's  
stepbrother in Geelong (G. Burn) - but  
the departure of the steamer was  
close at hand at the time and  
I did not venture in. It appears  
to be a nice well-stocked place,  
and I was much tempted to go in  
and see the boss.

I am getting along very  
well in the office so far; there  
has been a fair amount of work  
but <sup>I understand</sup> matters are much livelier at  
intervals. Young Klugender who  
manages the Common Law  
Department left for Adelaide the  
day I entered the office and is  
not back yet. This has made  
my position more onerous than  
I bargained for. I had to tackle  
a matter yesterday which gave me  
a little anxiety. In an agency  
matter we had entered a caveat  
against <sup>the</sup> a leasehold transfer on behalf  
of the official assignee of an insolvent  
whose interest in the lease had been  
sold by the Sheriff under a fi fa.  
The caveat was up yesterday, and  
consequently the transfer could have

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The Melbourne Coffee Tavern.

89 BOURKE STREET EAST.

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been registered today and the official assignee quitted on. In consequence of the lateness of receiving instructions and having to draw a long affidavit in support, I was late in getting to chambers and found that Justice Williams, who takes Chamber business this week, had gone for the day and no one knew where - Liginbolsheim was presiding in the Criminal Court and after a lot of delay and trouble I succeeded in getting ~~an~~ consent from him, through his associate, to hear the application when the Court rose in the evening. When I attended in his Chambers he was sitting in his scarlet robes but had thrown off that wonderful full-bottomed wig which muffers the judicial visage here. Two tall candles on the table threw up his face and figure very distinctly, and in the pauses of the business when he was consulting some authority or when he looked up with some question I could not help inwardly admiring his face and manner. The portrait in Löttinger's

is very like, but the man of to day  
is older looking and graver; ~~but~~  
The same intellectual forehead  
and well moulded features are there,  
I feel quite at my ease in his  
dignified but mild presence, and  
managed to get over some of his  
objections and obtained a satisfactory  
order for the extension of the caveat.  
I was in a bit of a funk about  
this matter for there was about  
£500 worth of property at stake,  
and I feel considerable relief when  
I drew the order, which I had to  
do on the spot and got his signature  
There was a miss with the Titles  
office ~~next morning~~ when I served  
~~the~~ <sup>the Registrar</sup> with copy order fuel thing this  
morning, they wanted to contend that  
the order should have been served  
before 3 pm yesterday, but they caved  
in eventually and the claw on the  
property remains - I have gone into  
detail over this little matter because  
it gives you some insight into the work  
I have to tackle, and introduces a  
Victorian celebrity for whom I know you  
entertain a deep respect -

Indeed, there is a divine difference  
between my life in this office and

that of G & B's. One of the first mots  
I perpetrated was to gently remark  
that there was a great lack of  
principal in ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> office - I go in  
and out and do my work with  
very little reference to them - Some  
days I have scarcely seen and  
never spoken to them - I write  
letters every day and I am  
so little concerned about a  
principal in the matter, that I  
often send them in by one of  
the juniors, who gets them signed  
and scuttles off with them - of  
course there is responsibility about  
this thing, but how different a  
man feels when he can make a  
dash to exercise his wits a little  
like this - How different to that miserable  
and ungenerous system under which  
I so long withered! Walter so very  
kind to me, and when I have had  
occasion to invoke his assistance he  
has always cordially rendered it. I am  
glad to say his health has improved  
of late, and he appears brighter and  
more communicative. It is needless to  
say how deeply I trust this will continue.  
for his long weakness has given his  
mother and sister considerable anxiety.  
When I went into his office one day



last week I found the man that  
only lives 'in the winter' in the  
enjoyment of sweet <sup>fraternal</sup> ~~filial~~ converse.  
With an uncertain kind of smile,  
he extended a very limp hand to me  
probably thinking that the first thing  
I would say to him would be -  
"Where ~~was~~ is the testimonial that you  
first of all promised to give me  
in Hobart and afterwards promised  
to send to Melbourne to me? Have  
you drafted it yet? or is it advanced  
to the stage of fair copy draft for  
perusal?" Some abstracting thought  
was in his mind for I do not  
recollect that he asked me how I  
was or how I liked the place, or the  
office or anything - Walter looked  
about as cheerful as a jilted  
opfer and after a few commonplace  
to my I beat a retreat. I have  
not seen him since. Walter is so  
charmed with his society that he  
confessed to me he made an  
appointment to meet him at Elborne  
Chambers the other ~~evening~~ <sup>afternoon</sup> and slept  
out the back way some ten minutes  
before the time. "How dreadful!" "Query"  
"See me hereon" - "What meant?" "I should  
like to have seen him wandering up and  
down the corridors like the nigger in the  
coal cellar with an extinguished candle looking



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blind  
for a black cat that wasn't there!  
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I saw George Macmillan one evening last week. I suddenly became aware that he was sitting next to me at a table in the Tavern at feature and the recognition was mutual. In the course of conversation he complained that his sisters didn't find time to write to him; but we agreed in the opinion that under the circumstances this was excusable. Willie and Edvard must skip this part if they do me the honor of reading this letter. This part too had better be kept from Mrs. G. for she's an awful tartar so the envelopes told me in strict confidence - Sing hey! the blissful border land, the merry maidens and the swains!

The Melbourne Chess Club is a veritable land of nod. It seems to be the one place where chessplayers are not to be found. I waited there several evenings lately and there was nothing but what going on. I have

not encountered Burns yet although  
I went on those nights when he gave  
me to understand he came to the  
Club. In fact the chess players here  
are a peculiar lot of fish, and if  
I had the same interest in the  
game I once had I should be  
deeply concerned to see so much  
apathy and ill-will about. Whether  
I am told, drinks like a 'true born'  
Bubsh swiper, and his appearance  
certainly does not belie this. Simpson  
another good player, an accountant,  
gets deliriously drunk - and Fournell  
says he ought to be put into the  
refuge for Inebriates - Burns doesn't  
get drunk on liquor, but he is  
involocated with his reputation -  
and won't play anybody who might  
beat him - Choughan played a game  
with me almost under protest as he  
said he had almost determined to  
give the game up - In fact as far  
as the Melbourne Chess Club is concerned  
its members appear to regard me as  
one of the mosquitoes with which the  
Club room is infested, and to be crushed  
away as much as possible - In saying  
this I am not raving under any  
snub or discourtesy, I am simply

receiving impressions derived from  
general observations and from these  
I must say they appear a sorry lot.  
There is a room specially set apart  
for Chess and draughts in this Tavern  
and several of the best players in the  
city belonging to a certain clique  
come here - Chief among these are  
J. M. Bunnell, and Burroughton the  
lightning player as they call him.

When I first came here I used to  
drop in here sometimes o' nights -  
but did not for some time play, or  
show my acquaintance with the game.  
The Chess Room is generally crowded  
of a night with a smother unshowered  
collection of players among whom  
Jews and Germans are conspicuous.

At least one night I sat down before  
Bunnell who didn't know anything of  
me at that time. One of his officious  
admirers wanted to know what odds  
I wanted, and looked quite amused  
when I said I would play level - I  
opened with the King's Gambit and  
played a variation from Thomas's  
which brings the Q K round to the  
King's side with a view of sacrificing  
it. I got a good game and soon became  
aware that a small crowd had gathered  
round the table, and eyeing me rather

anxiously. The excitement increased  
when Cornell had to lower his flag  
with the graceful acknowledgment  
that he did not think they had  
such strong players in Basmania.  
You ~~would~~ won't think me egotistical  
in recording this I hope. Since then  
of course, I am treated with profound  
consideration by the heterogeneous  
denizens of the Chess Room, and  
always have a gallery when I play.  
I don't frequent the room much, as  
I have determined to devote my spare  
time at present to more important  
studies pertaining to the office -  
I have played two games with Cornell  
since, losing one and drawing one.  
With the lightning player I have played  
4 games winning 2 drawing 1 losing one.  
Young H'Cole who is at the University  
visited me at the Tavern one evening  
last week and spent a pleasant evening  
with me discussing matters chiefly of  
the chess problem order for which he has  
a peculiar genius - These chess details  
I'm afraid will weary you, but Willie  
may find some interest in them - I'm  
just taking my fling in this letter.

David sent me a paper yesterday  
in which I see you are retained by the

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 Crown to ~~retain~~ <sup>defend</sup> that precious pair  
 of young murderers O'Gden and  
 Sutherland - I suppose you can  
 only plead their youth and the  
 unchecked spread of that pernicious  
 literature which acting upon  
 certain minds and temperaments  
 urges through very morbidness to  
 crime - What else to say, Heaven only  
 knows! I know if you can find  
 anything you will plead it without  
 reference to the fact that your retainer  
 is in ~~no~~ one sense only a legal  
 formality. You will not forget that,  
 whatever popular feeling is, that you  
 are charged to speak for the sparing  
 of their lives and you will do it  
 honestly and well - You must tell  
 me about this work when you write.

Sacking of Dave I should be  
 glad when you write if you tell me  
 how he is getting on. I think there  
 is the making of a good fellow in  
 him, and when I say this I do not  
 say it out of mere brotherly kindness.

One of my sisters tells me he is kind and considerate to them at home; and I cannot tell you how much I feel that this is so. I need not disguise the fact from you that my mother was very fond of me, and I know she kept back a good deal when I told her I would leave home. I am therefore glad to think that Dave's conduct will make her think less of my absence.

When household cares remit perhaps your partner in joy and sorrows will write me a line or two. The very sight of handwriting I know is pleasant to me. Will you kindly put in a word for me? I wonder what Emmy and Johnny would do if they got into the Arcades here when all the treasures of loy &c are glittering under the rows of electric light. They'd just <sup>miss</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>Shooman's</sup> would be <sup>afell,</sup> I guess. Are small beans after that vision. Are they and Anew well. I hope so. I send them my unsubstantial kisses over "the silver streak". We would have a spree if I had them in the Tavern for a while. Of course I don't mean

Anew too. He'd funk on it and cry  
to get back to his mother and not  
play the spark at all. But Johnny  
I think 'ud ruffle it well - and Emmy  
- well Emmy of course would be  
very prim and quiet à la papa -  
except at those intervals when she  
avers it nice to be naughty and  
she wants to be bad.

I received a letter from George  
on Tuesday <sup>last</sup> giving me particulars  
of the Menora Meeting which it seems  
was an animated one - He informs  
me that he goes to Sydney shortly -  
I hope it will improve his prospects.  
As he requested me to address my  
letter to him at Sydney, I shant say  
anything further on this head at present.  
He appears to be in good spirits, but  
he is never dejected in those; and  
very sanguine with regard to the  
good mine spec -  
Tell Bobbie I intend to write him  
a letter presently. Indeed, I should have  
done so before. But he 'woud see my  
letters <sup>to the wife</sup> and that has made me late in writing.  
The hour grows late - I have  
written a long and perhaps dull letter.  
I have spoken straight out without



much pondering. Perhaps you will  
find it better for that - My  
hand falters now but dear Andrew,  
my heart does not and would  
bear up for more pages -

With kindest regards to Mrs  
Bearr and the ladies of the circle,  
and my comrade love to the Boys,  
Believe me, affectly yours

J. G. Norton

PS I sent you an "Auskalassian"  
with a poem of G.H.'s in it. What  
do you think of it? I have not seen  
her since its publication - I have  
not called upon Mrs Webster yet -  
I shall try and go to the Unitarian  
Chapel next Sunday when I may  
have the opportunity of ~~having~~ <sup>seeing</sup>  
speaking to her - Remember me to Lucy.  
Tell him to write, and that quickly -  
Willie's letter was very welcome - I will  
write him soon - J. G. Norton