

The Andrew Hotel Melbourne
 Fitzroy Melbourne 8 Oct 1877

Dear Andrew,

Within 15 minutes of receiving your kind
 glowing letter I am sitting down to answer it, I am in my
 bedroom, my favorite room, surrounded by piled-up books &
 papers, voluminous reports, notes, letters & the miscellaneous letters
 so dear to me - The air is close & sultry, indicative of a change,
 & there is that ominous silence that foretells the storm - My
 heart is full of mingled emotions, - love, friendship, pride,
 dis-appointment, uncertainty. Head & heart alike are in a
 whirl & if this scrawl is indicative of my moods it will
 indeed be a Curiosity -

I have just returned from a hasty visit from
 the Victorian Railway where I have bade Adieu to my
 old friend Friday who has gone for a lengthened Expedition
 into the interior & from saying good-bye (perhaps for ever)
 to a lady whose name I have mentioned before & who
 seems destined to figure (I'm un-^{der}stand) in my future
 Oh, Andrew, my dear friend, how I wish I had you
 here - to advise, comfort, assist! What a up I am!
 I don't know what I have been saying or doing but I
 seem to have got into a dreadful fix. I find myself
 half engaged to a girl with many accomplishments,
 a kind & loving heart, a good income, a home, parents
 & friends of the happiest & most enviable type &
 yet, God knows why, I don't care two straws whether
 I ever see her again - She has haunted me lately; has
 let me have no rest & I - weak fool - "knowing the
 "game was foolish", turned on by my sentimentalities &
 passion have been building up an ideal which I know is

far from the reality & all the time I am desperately
in love with another, far away, who I am afraid
can never be mine - What is this? Weakness, folly,
imbecility? None of these I think, but simply the
overpowering of a heart that is full of love, that
loves it as unworthy object & strives for the reality.
Don't think me mad or drunk - Nothing has passed my
lips (now long temperate) save water & dry & my head is
cool & collected (as perhaps you will shortly discover) while
my heart is at lava heat. And for what? I cannot
answer the question. But I must ~~write~~ discontinue
this; I might write for a week. But explain myself
& yet in a personal interview I could explain myself
in a few sentences had I you here, - you my best
& trust of friend, advisers & guides.

I am off the streets ^{now} back to every day life -

I'll take up your case & discuss it in detail.

You should not thank me for the "trouble" I have taken
in connection with your M.S.L. - It was nothing & I
have much to do yet ere I can gratify my long cherished
wish of being of service to you & you need not have
written to the Editor; I know exactly your sentiments on
the matter as regards remuneration & you have rendered
useful the note I had ready for him - ~~And~~ I cannot
see why you should entertain any apprehension of
the article being expunged - I think Mr. Martin's note
is proof & conclusive that he would not have written
so kindly as he did if he had arrived at an
unfavourable determination - No, no, the article
is all right, especially since the difficulty alluded
to is cleared up - I repeat that I think its
acceptance is safe.

I don't know why you should be surprised with
regard to my determination ~~with regard to N.S.W.~~
You know from previous letters how often my thoughts
have turned in that direction & that this is no
new freak - To sum the matter up (for its simplicity
itself) I am in a good position here, - better perhaps
than I deserve - True I work hard night & day but that
I like better than otherwise - But I have got to
the top of the tree & what remains? Ambition is
impossible here & what is the use of resting for
ever - I could not remain stationary & what am I
to do - Two fields offer themselves - Tasmania
is poor with uncertain though promising prospects -
But to return there is a confession of failure &
an indication of repentance; ~~then becoming~~
though I know I am taking low ground, I cannot
though I fail would, think serious of it - New
South Wales remains, - admission easy, almost
I believe (for I am daily expecting an answer
from the Prothonotary of the Sup Ct there) almost a matter
of course - The field is large, wide, fertile - Fortunes
are made quickly & if there is discomfort
I am prepared to meet it. Perhaps you ask
What is the motive for all this; why this hurry
& restlessness? This is a question hard to answer -
but perhaps the true answer is pride & ambition -
I long to do something for the sake of those dear
to me - for myself I care nothing, now or hereafter -
My life is a blank - I take pleasure in nothing
save business - & since the last resource of the
unhappy (~~disruption~~ dissipation) has failed me long
since, I am absolutely without hope or fear -

I ~~hesitate~~ dare say I get over yet away to Lta at
Christmas as you suggest - I will pass over it that you know
before long - I don't think I could go away without seeing you -
My business would remain open for me, I believe, when
vacation commences - Meanwhile my determination remains unchanged

I long to see you very much but you must not think
of leaving Tasmania permanently - You would make a great
mistake - I believe all your hopes, aims, & prospects are bound up
with its future & you will I know, in a short time assume
your proper place - You touch a responsive chord, dear friend,
when you mention, with the nearest approach your sanguine
nature can make to despondency, of your present fears & the
chill that every noble nature feels when it finds the unworthy
preferred, for the time being, to the worthy - The fault is the
real - Ah you will rise above that - "To think own self be
true" the game is in your hands - Do you think the
Secret Court of Courts in Tasmania has escaped my notice -
Or that I am forgetful of the fact that 109 years ago, almost
to the day - I was teaching the present Attorney General of
Tasmania Classics & History? True, there is no comparison
between your case & mine; I but ^{read} ~~was~~ as I have ^{said} ~~expressed~~, -
but the result & the feelings are the same - No, visit Victoria,
if for a while if you will, gladden my eyes for a
time but do not yet think of leaving the place where
I for one think you are sure to succeed - Broom - mind your
age - You are a young man yet I think how much you
have done in the 14 years that I have known you at
your proper estimate - Surely, this is one of Time's ^{rewards} ~~rewards~~
that I should be tenderly chiding you for the impudence
that has been ^{to} my bane - But you will let me know more
of this -

I have written fast & warmly & have said my say
for the present. All other matters I leave over for the
present without apologies which should be superfluous
between us two - My work awaits me & without
more ado I bid you good night & of good cheer

Your affectionate friend, J. Hill

P.S. Reply as soon as you can
did you see my brother?