

(Copy)

"Perth, Swan-River, Western Australia, 13 April 1854"

"My Dear Hannah"

"Tho. this letter cannot go forward till the middle of May, I begin it to-day as I mean it to be a sort of journal letter, I wish to write it before the matter gets muddled in my head - I wrote to Reuben from Albany stating that I had changed my mind & meant to come forward here - I have this day arrived & been very kindly received by Mr. Sanford, Colonial Secretary, whose guest I am while I stay at Perth - He is a friend of Sir W. Hooker's & you may remember that my boxes &c were shipped to his care from London & await my arrival here - Well! by my change of plan !!! (*ooca culpa! ooca culpa!*) and cross directions to him, he has forwarded them by a vessel to Melbourne just 3 days ago, so I arrive just in time to be too late - But he comforts me with the hope of getting paper for my purpose here, & fortunately I require none of the other things I am glad I came forward as I shall probably make an interesting collection here, & find much attention from the Officials in the way of facilitating one, as a Pilot-boat, use of an empty house &c &c, so now for my journey hither -

I left Albany by the mail-cart (a spring-cart like a Butcher's cart) on Sunday Morn. 2<sup>nd</sup> Inst. at 8 O'Clock - my luggage filled the greater part of the vehicle, leaving just room for Mr. Maxwell (the proprietor, contractor, coachman, all in one) & myself, to sit ~~and~~ a corner for her Majesty's ~~mailing~~ scarcely had we fairly started when one of the traces broke, while it was, mending I walked forward at a leisurely pace - the morning being warm I was not overtaken till the 3<sup>rd</sup> milestone where I waited under a tree till the cart came up - The Sun was brightly shining, but a pleasant cool westerly breeze kept me happy - There were few flowers in so short a distance that I had not previously gathered - the only one I can remember was a handsome Protea shrub (either *Isopogon* or *Petrophila*) with large purple flowers resembling those of a Centaurea - this was just coming into blossom & in abundance under the larger trees - We went forward with varying speed, the poor horse evidently not liking the load & occasionally halting & requiring to be slashed & dragged forward - Thus we went along - I walking fully half the way for 16 miles, where on the banks of a large lagoon now nearly dry, we halted had dinner - The country was a succession of wooded low hills & sandy scrubby flats, & has left small impression on the memory - After dinner I walked forward, expecting to be taken up, but finding no cart following me by sunset, I sat down by the roadside to wait for it, & after a time it came along - Mr. M. walking & leading the horse, & the horse staggering at every few hundred yards & requiring a whip & pulling to get him forward - We had however to force him on to the 25<sup>th</sup> milestone, the nearest water - & then we encamped an hour or two after dark - It was a brilliant starlight night & I lay before the fire snugly wrapped up in an opossum rug which the good Archdeacon had kindly lent me - the same kind friend had furnished me with a portable tent but as the night was very fine & I could not understand the mountings of the tent in the dark, I did not put it up this night - We soon had a blazing fire, boiled our tea, & partook of a plum cake which my landlady, Mr. Robinson, had given me for the road - so closed our first day's journey -

I slept well, & was up by daylight on the 3<sup>rd</sup> - we had breakfast at 6 O'Clock & walked forward thro' a gradually more hilly country - by 1/2 past 7 I arrived at Mt. Baker 30 miles from Albany, a chain of higher hills covered with a thin forest of gum trees, with open places of grazing ground for sheep here & there - Some of the trees were nearly 4 feet in diameter for nearly 30 feet or so, to the <sup>top</sup> branch - These appeared to me large, then - being fresh from the K.G. Sound forests, but I have seen many bigger since - After 1/2 an hour's further walking I passed a large flock of sheep feeding under the care of some native shepherds, one of whom advanced & saluted me, asking the news &c &c - I told me in return that the sheep belonged to Mr. Daniel of Albany, one that supplieth customers with mutton - He came out to the Colony as a servant to a rich man, he is now rich with flock & herds, men-servants & maidens, but his Master is reduced to poverty - So, of many of the original settlers & their servants - they have settled themselves, & changed places - About 9 O'Clock as I waited in the forest for the mail cart I heard a horse's feet behind me & looking back saw Mr. Maxwell riding



Ironstone Conglomerate - It fed, however, a great variety of rigid leaved small shrubs as the fernlike ground Banksias & Dryandrus - thorny round leaved Hakeas - small Myrtaceae, scrubby Eucalypti, with here & there a scattered tree - such was the country till near noon when I entered the hills, among which the Gordon flows, & where the usual forest of gum trees white fresh & again closed me in - Plenty of Kangaroos were hopping along in various directions, of all sizes, & for several succeeding days I saw many heads of them - They are still abundant all thro' the district, I was just entering on - at 12 I reached the river, & was hospitably rec<sup>d</sup> by Mr Gregory who with a road-party is here encamped putting up a bridge for Gov<sup>t</sup> - We had kangaroo steaks for dinner, the first time I had tasted it - it is insipid meat with neither good or bad flavor - After dinner I started several kangaroo cats close to the house - their motion is very like that of the ferboa, the body being carried more horizontally in leaping than the kangaroo - I slept in Mr G's tent - after breakfast next morning, the 6<sup>th</sup> - we took a walk thro' the woods - The men are now employed felling timber for the bridge & I was informed that a vast majority of the trees are found to be hollow & rotten in the centre thro' with no external symptom of decay - Mr G: pointed out to me sundry of the trees, by their Colonial names - from one of the Eucalypti (called blooded gum) his brother prepared an essential oil having a great similarity to Capivi, which from the scent of the leaves I can well believe - He also told me that in the old famine times, when Corn costs scarcely be had for love or money their family had nearly lived for some time on the starch extracted from the stems of the Laminia (Macrogamia Precipia) & that it resembled Arrowroot but was better & was very abundant in the stems & of the stony starch from each - as the plant is very common in some districts it must be a valuable stand by - The roots are emetic (as they has proved to their cost) but may be rendered harmless by watering & steeping I have myself eaten freely of a tasteless gum which exudes from the leaves & stem & which is doubtless a slightly altered form of the starch - It would make a very fair jelly if properly seasoned, having all the qualities of "stock" - clearness, firmness & tastelessness - furthermore mattresses are stuffed with a fibro-woolly material which clothes the young leaves & collects in quantity at their base as they expand - I am going to have a small bush mattress made up of it - When we returned from our walk we found that Maxwell had arrived with peel horses & proposed making an afternoon start - so dinner was ordered to be ready at noon & we made an excellent meal from kangaroo tail soup, & preserved Beef - we had had kangaroo steaks for breakfast - The soup was at that hour hopping about the woods, but in the interim our Providence (a ticket of leave poacher) brought in 4 kangaroos for the mess - We had dined & started before one had yet seen a wooded undulating country as before - On one hill I collected seeds of Hakea Brownii a very remarkable species with fan shaped leaves so like those of H. Baxteri that but for the fruit which resembles wooden peaches I could not tell them asunder - On another hill was growing the Handsomest Hakea I have yet seen which at present I hold for an inland variety of H. Eucalyptoides (sent from Cape Ritchie) This was a most graceful tree with wandlike branches, dark green glossy leaves & dense balls of crimson flowers with long protruding cream-colored styles - I enclose seeds of both for the garden - both are rare species - The day was bright & warm after 14 miles stage we left the road for rather more than a mile to the right for the purpose of encamping near a water hole & pitched our tent on the top of a hill which Maxwell said would be much warmer than in the valley below - You know things go by contraries in this part of the world -

7<sup>th</sup> - at 1/2 past 6, I started on foot before the cart, thro' a gum-tree forest, the morning being clear & cool, & the birds chirping among the trees - There are several chipmunks, a few whistlers, many screamers, screechers, & yelpers, but no coustons among the birds here - The two first kinds are heard early in the morning - the others at intervals all day long - But on the whole the woods are very silent, particularly destitute of noisy insects - At night a "cater-wauling" of frogs making noises which I cannot spell, alone breaks the silence - The ground I traversed had recently been burned - so I had a rather dreary walk till 1/2 past 11 when we stopped - the cart came up, & we dined under a large Red-gum, the best tree for shade in this part of the world - It is a noble species I must be superb when in blossom, as the white myrtle-shaped blossoms are as big as 1/2 crown & come in dense bunches at the top of every branch - the fruit is as big as a crab apple very hard & woody but containing large well-tasted seeds which are the favorite food of the black red cockatoos, whose hard bills are well adapted for tearing open the husk - After dinner I again walked forward, but took a wrong turning in the road, & after a leisurely walk of 4 or 5 miles, finding the cart did not follow I lay down under a tree to take a nap - In an hour I awoke & rightly guessed that the cart had taken another road - Looking round (which I ought to have done before lying down) I saw a little distance forward a sheep station which I knew was not on the proper road - I went into the hut & the shepherd soon put me on the proper track, & told me I had but 4 miles to walk to Kojenup where the cart was to halt for the night - I walked the distance in an hour, arriving at 1/2 past 3 P.M. I found Maxwell & the cart all right - The town of Kojenup is a sort of Malines, (I mean Mechlin) of the Colony, a place everyone talks about as a centre from which roads branch off - At present it consists of 3 or 4 wretched wooden huts on the side of a grassy hill - there is a considerable cattle & sheep run in the neighbourhood, but much poisoned, & the water at all seasons is brackish - As the grass was now dried up & all the smaller plants with it, I had nothing to do but take a nap - after collecting a miserable groundsel, the only plant in flower - I slept on a stretcher in a hut, the next apartment was a stable imperfectly screened off, & thro' the many open chinks between the planks came in a breeze which blew on me fresh from some casks of half-tanned opossum skins - not the sweetest or freshest odour in the world - Kojenup enjoys a manufacture of fur rugs, but I could not procure one ready made, I was asked £4 for one made to order, which I declined - A year back the price was £2, but the steamers & passengers fresh from Melbourne have spoiled the market - the skins are brought in by the natives & exchanged for a trifle of Tobacco or flour - the currency most in repute amongst them -

8<sup>th</sup> - The morning was grey & cold, it was 1/2 past 4 before we got fairly on the road - From this place a new road has just been completed to Perth, & to-day we were to test it for the first time - We found it very straight - carried right ahead up the hills, down the hills, like an Auto-track, taking every obstacle in the face - As it lay across a sandy plain & over sandy hills, it was heavy walking & cruel riding - We walked almost the whole way, & yet it was the worst day on the horses - The country was burnt & dreary - I was glad when noon brought us to dinner beside a well of excellent water, & still better pleased when we encamped by the Beaufort in the evening, having travelled 24 miles - Near our dining ground I measured a Cabbage tree (Myrtia) ten feet in circumference the largest Comanthaceous stem I have yet seen - On the 9<sup>th</sup> we set forward by 7 O'clock in the morning, dull & grey but not cold & after travelling 6 miles stopped for water near a perennial spring, the only one known on the road for a distance of over 100 miles - I stayed with the cart while M. started off with a bucket, but quickly returned disgusted, saying he had found 8 or 10 dead Kangaroos in all stages of decay in the well - The spring issues under an overhanging rock and the Kangaroo coming round to drink, tumble over - I have recommended this well to the protection of Govt., which it surely deserves



I was pointed out a place where the proprietor, a retired Major had expended £20,000 & after many years of struggling died in poverty & debt - latterly receiving thankfully (as a loan) fr poor man his pride would not acknowledge it an alms, a small subscription raised for him among the Colonists - He was one of the early settlers, who came out with the notion of living with ease & comfort, if not luxury - He has left two daughters, one of them insane, the other a governess - The road soon entered the deep sands which surround the town of Perth & thro. which we had to pull for 4 or 5 miles - poplars & Kingias & Larriars of large size abounded & a low forest of large Banksias gradually thickened as we approached the City, till from the top of a hill about 2 miles out, we caught the first view of the Swan shining thro. a glade in the woods, no unwelcome sight after our 11 days of bush travelling - We crossed the road by a long causeway & bridges, & a gently rising hill led us up the principal street - The cart stopped at Mr. Sandford's at 9 o'clock - He had not finished dressing, but the servant showed me into my bedroom to wait, & whilst I was enjoying a plentiful dose of water & soap, Mr. S. & I kept up a brisk Pyramus & Thisbe conversation thro. a closed door before either had seen the other, so that we were old acquaintances by the time we met at breakfast, half an hour after -

Now I have brought my story down to the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> on which I commenced the narration which I finish on the 15<sup>th</sup> - I will spare thee any further news till the mail is nearer being sent off - Please to keep this letter the former ones, still Sisterella the same, as material, for cooking up a journal - fr I have latterly kept nothing but notes, and so farewell - I have just negociated my quarter salary £75 @ 3/8<sup>th</sup> Disc. £42.15.0, abt. half what I paid in Ceylon -

April 18<sup>th</sup> - As there is a Sailing Vessel going from this to Singapore which takes an English mail to be posted there, I run the chance of sending this letter by her, as it may thus anticipate the regular mail by a month - I am still at Perth as Mr. Sandford's guest, but hope to be settled at Freemantle in a few days - I shall not be quite so comfortably lodged there as at good Mr. Robinson's, as I am obliged to take up my quarters in the Hotel, but so much otherwise has been otherwise done to help me forward that I have reason to speak in warm terms of the kindness of the people here, I have the use of some empty rooms at the public offices, to dry my plants, the use of the Pilot boats of 6 tons with two men, for dredging - the loan of a dredge, sea rake & ropes for fishing - my own dredge having been too heavy to carry over land from the Sound - the use of a tent by the shore should I wish to fix myself for a week or so at Woodman's Point, a famous shell station - the use of the Governor's house at Rottnest Island when I visit that place - &c. &c. - Most of these I owe to Mr. Sandford's active kindness - nothing could be more frank, hospitable, & kind, & thoughtful in everything, than he has been - Capt. Henderson at Freemantle, the Chief Commissioner of Convicts, is also very kind & has some taste for Natural History, I've are to go dredging together, Sandford says I shall find him a very good fellow - I shall have to tell in my next what my success has been - Nothing comes on shore here except after gales, & there is very little tide, less than at the Sound - The weather just now is perfect (very good for dredging) and we live in hope of storms next month - This is the races week, & thro. I don't care a fig about them, I fear I must see them out as I. is one of the Stewards & interested in the matter - He is sadly out of place here being a much superior man to any that he has to work with, & not properly appreciated - He is a thoroughly conscientious, active, clear-sighted, rapid-minded man of the modern school, tired to drones, slow-coaches, jobbers & snarlers - Just supported by the good natured but weak-minded & inefficient Governor - so that he is kept in a constant state of worry & annoyance - I do hope the new Governor, expected in a few months, may be a better one - Mr. O'Shaugherty of Galway is spoken of as the probable appointment - not a very pleasant prospect to look forward to, particularly as he is a R. C. & that party has been particularly troublesome & encroaching here, while our poor C. is in a miserably low & wretched state - Love to all &c. &c. - "W. H. H."

I hope to get R. Ball a set of Western Australia Native Birds before I leave, but this depends on their coming in - Mr. S. is sending Sir Wm. Hooker a box of wooden Pears (*Xylomelia Occidentale*) - I will tell him to send some seeds to our gardens - It is one of the most beautiful of the shrubs here, having bright green leaves & long clusters of white flowers - sometimes two feet long with the scent of Hawthorn - I have not seen it, & it grows 100 miles from this -



Harvey, William H. 1854. "Harvey, William Henry Apr. 13, 1854 [copy] [to Hannah Harvey]." *William Henry Harvey letters* –.

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