

March 1843

Dear Father

I wrote you last when I was in town Dec 23^d & since then I have really had little time to write we are always so busy here I have always enjoyed excellent health since I came into the Colony and with this preface I shall give you some account of what we have been so busy about, In the first place I (who six months ago had never seen a bale of wool pressed in my life) this season conducted the pressing of ten thousand fleeces, and that to the avowed satisfaction of my employer. We had besides 30 acres of wheat to harvest. The crop of wheat was equal in bulk to any that I have ever seen at home although not so productive however it will average 10 bolls per acre and that off ground which gets no manure except the burnt stubble and is in crop every year. We cut the wheat in this country just as long as to bind & then burn the stubble, the wheat is generally a good deal affected with smut or black as you call it which obliges us to wash it before grinding it our harvest commenced in Dec^r & ended in January. Both wheat and barley

I have had no opportunity of seeing how fruits thrive
in general in the Colony but we have here abundance
of Water & Rock-Melons & there are as many on the
table just now ~~as~~ would regale you all, In the morning
I have to visit an out station generally to see the shepherds
out by sunrise so that you may easily conjecture that
I am pretty early up to be at least three or four miles
& sometimes 7 or 8 miles before the sun is up, On these
visits I generally count out the flocks to see that they
are all right, and I have no doubt you would be rather
surprised to see me counting sheep as you know well
that I never counted a score in my life at home Be
that as it may, by paying attention to it I can now beat
all the men on the place at it though some of them
have been nearly twenty years amongst sheep, As an
instance how I get on I give you the following, I dismounted
myself saddled a horse rode about three miles & counted
out nearly five thousand sheep and was on my way
home within the hour Amongst other things incidental
to the colony are the devastating fires which sweep the
country in every direction at this season of the year

When the grass gets on fire (the slightest spark being sufficient to ignite it especially in a hot day) it comes on in a line sometimes many miles in extent sweeping everything before leaving not a vestige of vegetation behind except the foliage of the trees which it doesn't reach about three weeks ago I witnessed one of the most splendid sights I have ever beheld, the fire was coming upon us towards evening Capt Hoepburn & I rode out to see what progress it was making, as the best time for putting it out is at night one man then doing as much as three in the middle of the day. The fire which we went to reconnoitre was spread out for many miles in one unbroken line of fire as far as the eye could stretch nothing was to be seen but the red glare of fire rendered vividly bright by the gloom of darkness and smoke which now surrounded us. But next day we paid for the fine sight as every man had to turn out to save the Home station from the same fire. We strike it out with green boughs and I believe ^{it} to be as exhausting work as any that ^{a person} you can try. The grass which was then burned as black as coal without a vestige left, is now again as green as leek & the most beautiful feed imaginable upon it.

Dear Father

March 25 Aug 1823

I have never commenced a letter that
I could finish at the same time the same with this
Our drays are about to start with wool so I cannot
lose the opportunity unpunished for it is I have no
chance of writing again till the days get shorter for
I am constantly engaged from an hour before sunrise
to sunset & two hours afterwards keeping acct of
having between 20 & 25 men to look after & no one
at home but myself just now Write one often
& make Cecilia & Isabel write a part of your
letters & tell me what you think of coming & what
my aunt says With kind remembrances to all
friends

I am Dear Father in haste
And this to George
with kind love
I never write poetry now

Wm Butchart