

74 Leopold Street, South Yarra, Melbourne, Vic. 1

January

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1944

AL/1725

Dear Mr Martyr - It was so very good to see your handwriting yesterday, the 25th, although your letter was dated the 20th. But I was sorry indeed to hear you have been desperately ill, & do trust you will soon be your active self again. What a blessing your husband was there to take care of you. His tender care would help to give you back your health & strength.

I thank you for what you say of our talks, & I can assure you with all my heart I reciprocate all you say for my talks with you meant so much to me. I told you once that I know no one here, no women I mean, with whom I can discuss the questions in which you & I are interested. No women at all to whom the moral & legal status of women, their spiritual value in human affairs, the welfare & rights of the so-called "Common Man" & the interdependence of nations, is really vital

What is going to rouse the women of Australia, indeed the women of the world, to such devotion to sacrifice for freedom, as inspired the Suffragettes?

One would have thought the war would have roused them to action. The women in England seem to be more awake than those in any other country, but even there the really vital spark seems lacking.

So far, & I'm dreadfully sorry to say it, I am disappointed with our two friends at Canberra. Such golden opportunities have been passed by.

Senator Tangney valiantly raised the question of uniform divorce laws, but nowhere did I see that she urged equality for men & women in such legislation. Perhaps she was not fully reported, but she was reported as repeating her previous emphatic statement that she is not a feminist!

Tomorrow I expect to see one of the Federal Ministers in regard to the treatment of women suffering from V.D., & I shall speak to him also about the proposed divorce legislation. I shall let you know if anything worth while

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Comes of our interview.

AL/1725 cont

I have not heard from Iris Dowie I am
so pleased to know she values the voter

February 11 -

A fortnight + 2 days since I was called
away when I had completed the above
sentence! All that time before I could take my
pen up again, & I did want to send an
immediate reply to your letter when you
told me you had been so very ill. And on
Saturday at the Celebration Luncheon in the
Fitzroy Gardens we were told you had had a
relapse. That was sad news, but it was good to
hear it was for a brief period. We had a
delightful time, & wished you were with us. I
still feel you do not belong to Sydney!
Melbourne is the central city. Why not make it
your headquarters? We'll allow you to go for
short periods to the other Capital cities.
Melbourne needs you most. There seem to be
more go-ahead women in Sydney to do some
galvanising among the rank & file. Has anything

been done about the Marriage & Divorce Bill? The Women's Service Guild in Perth may have taken action - it, usually, is on the alert. I am awaiting eagerly the next issue of "Dawn". Did you ever hear anything about the New Zealand Conference? They did not reply in any way to my telegram.

What did you think of the Women's Conference in Sydney?

I have not seen the Federal Minister yet. He was called off to a series of conferences, & now he is at Canberra.

I have heard from Iris Dowie - a very nice letter. I shall write her as soon as possible.

Write the story of the pioneer days? I wish I could, but my present work takes all my time. It means very late hours - but what does that matter when one is helping others to live?

I have thought that I might give some talks on the radio recording in general terms the early history of the movement here, & my own experiences

I could make them interesting, informative, helpful - but at present I have not time even for that. I should love to meet D Sumner Skill but there was a cable some weeks ago saying that she could not leave England at this time. If she did come, I should certainly call on her, & a word to her from you would be most acceptable.

Many thanks for the Herald Tribune excerpt. I am still surprised beyond measure at the attitude of old warriors towards the amendment.

I shall always be glad to receive papers or clippings that you do not want for yourself or others. There were only 7 at the Luncheon, but we surveyed the world from China to Peru & had a good time altogether. I was interested to meet Miss Whitehead, but I think she was rather overcast by some of the views expressed, especially in regard to monetary reform. The Suffragist v. Suffragette attitude of mind - & action again. I mean to get her address from Miss Casey, & get her to come along for tea one afternoon.

My sister is off to town & will post this for the afternoon mail so you should get it tomorrow morning. Perhaps not - there may be the same delay in its reaching you as there was with yours reaching me.

Have you met Stella Franklin? She is one of our most "distinguished" novelists. We are great personal friends - we have known her since she was a girl - but we do not always see things alike. Entre nous, she is an undisciplined woman, without any spiritual convictions, always struggling with a sense of frustration, but when she lets herself go, she is witty & amusing.

I have asked you a lot of questions!

Always lovingly yours
Vida Goldstein
