

Letters of Sophie La Trobe

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1. Letters of Sophie La Trobe to her daughter Agnes, 1845-1853

Extracts transcribed by Helen Botham.

Source: La Trobe Neuchâtel Archive, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS 13354/folders 27 and 28; and also MS 14152/3. (Original archive is held in the Fonds Petitpierre, Archives de l'Etat Neuchâtel, Switzerland.)

Jolimont May 25th 1845

What shall I say to you dearest child, but that you are in our thoughts constantly – I am thinking every day many a time what you are doing – Do you think you will be able to read maman's handwriting. I will try to write plainer every time. How much I hope that you are good with kind Mrs Ferguson [ship captain's wife] & obedient in everything – & that you do not forget to say your prayers every day, morning & evening, though there's no one to hear you as maman did & pray for papa & maman & your dear little sisters. Nelly never forgets dear Agnes in her prayers – she said the other day she wanted Agnes to come back, & that she would not let her go away again – she is a good little girl & says her letters every day. Dear baby [Cecile] is always as you left her except that she speaks much plainer than she did. Charlotte & Rose [Swiss born housekeeper and her daughter] are quite well and I wish to tell grand maman so because I forgot to say so in my letter to her. Perhaps you will be with Gd maman & tante Rose when you receive this and I shall be very happy to hear that you have arrived there & that you are a good girl – Another day I will tell you more about your friends here & many other things. Now I have only time to say God bless my dearest little Agnes and make her a good girl and teach her to love Him & to do His will. Kiss your little cousins for me...

Jolimont 15 August 1845

Papa will tell you how nicely the garden is getting on. This winter he has been planting a great many trees and bushes and we shall soon have abundance of flowers... I must now ask you to tell dear grand-maman that Charlotte and Rose are well though Charlotte has been rather unwell for the past fortnight from cold I think but Dr Howitt saw her and gave her some pills which have done her good. Rose is still going to Mrs Winter's to school and I think she is improving in her learning and sewing. She is now sewing baby clothes for poor people I gave her to do. Your sisters are just come in to say Good bye as they were going to play, out of doors. I asked what I might tell dear Sissy. Nelly began a fine speech "Oh my dear Agnes" but she said then "I send her a great kiss" and baby said "bye bye". They are continually asking when we will go and see you... I see Papa has told you all about the household people and beasts. The garden is much improved for papa has been planting a great deal – many Golden wattles, and bushes of all kinds.

How happy I shall be my darling, when I get a letter from you and from Mrs Ferguson about you, and then from England and afterwards from Switzerland telling us everything about you and your voyage, but it will be many months till I can have that pleasure. In the meantime I think of you and pray for you my dear child that God may bless you and keep you and make you a good child and a child of His. Kiss all your relations for me and papa and your sisters.

Your very affectionate mother, Sophie La Trobe.

Jolimont 16th February 1846

We thank God with all our hearts to have preserved you amidst so many dangers and I was glad to hear that you had been very well and very cheerful,- and a good obedient girl. If you could only know dearest child how happy we are when we learn that you have been a good and docile child. I hope you will endeavour to be so always so that good Aunt Rose and Gd maman may always be pleased with you, and report well of you.

Port Phillip Heads 2nd April 1846

I shall not let this day pass without writing to you a few lines, my dearest child, especially as a ship is expected to come down from Melbourne tomorrow, going to London. I am very sorry that your dear papa is absent, as he would have liked very much to write to his little girl too on this her 9th birthday. God bless you, my darling child to make you a good little girl, that you may be a comfort to your dear aunt & to your dear Gd maman, instead of giving them trouble - we shall have much pleasure to learn that you are getting very obedient & that you are trying in every way to make us happy by your good behaviour to those very kind friends who are taking care of you... We came from Melbourne a month ago and shall remain another fortnight. Your dear little sisters are very well & speak often of Agnes - they have had many a bath in the sea & they are very brave & very good, especially Cecile, who lets Mrs Heywood [the nurse] duck her... Your little brother is very well too & very strong & full of life, thank God. I wish you could see, your little fellow. Nelly & Cecile are very fond of him, but Cecile teases him a little by her fondness, which is rather rough at times. Mrs Bell is here with me - she sleeps in the hut, but the rest of the time she is my guest as well as her husband & Mrs Fairfax. When they are here you are not forgotten by kind Mrs Bell, who often speaks of you. You were remembered today very particularly & we drank your health at dinner. Dear papa has been here twice only & only a few days both times - he is now on an [excursion ?] to Cape Otway, but will be here again I hope in a few days. He was very sorry to be away on Nelly's birthday & on yours, but surely he thinks of you, dear child, today & prays God to bless you.

Now I must thank you for the two letters I got from you the day before we left Jolimont. They gave us much pleasure and I hope you will continue to write to us & try as much as possible to let us know what you are doing & describe what you see. Mrs Ferguson's journal came at the same time. I shall never forget all her kindness to you & the tender care she took of you during the long & perilous voyage. I hope you will never forget her & her good advices & recommendations. I shall be glad to hear that she has seen tante Rose...

We have heard that Cap. & Mrs Ferguson were coming back to this colony so I hope to see her & thank her & speak of you with her...

I must say good bye & good night...may God bless you, this day & all days of your life.

Your maman, who loves you very tenderly.

Jolimont June 23rd 1846

Dear papa has been very busy in the garden lately - you know that it is winter here...As you remember that it is the season for planting and sowing as there is no snow on the ground.... I hope you do not forget all your friends here...Mr and Mrs Gilbert, the Howitts, the Lonsdales, Edith Howitt, Alicia.

Government House, Hobart Town, V D Land, 7th December 1846

...In general we think this country a great deal more beautiful than Port Phillip for we see here a great many hills and mountains and you know I had never seen any since I left Switzerland and it reminded me of my own native land. You know that we have left Charlotte at Jolimont to take care of the house and place and of course Rose is with her always going to school and being I hope a good girl. You had promised to write to Charlotte, she is still expecting a letter. She writes to me that it is very hot weather at Melbourne & that the garden is beginning to suffer from the hot wind. Papa brought [home to Jolimont] cacti from Sydney, among other things a pair of beautiful little green parrots, quite small.

Jolimont Melbourne 4th April 1847

...We began to have workmen about the house to make some additions to it but I will let dear papa tell you all about it as he will draw you a picture of it at the same time – it will make the house look quite different to what it does in Mr Gilbert's pictures but nothing is finished yet and till it is we shall be rather uncomfortable...

Thank your little friends Henri and Elizabeth for their kind messages they sent me and give my kind regards to all the ladies at La Rochette especially cousin Matilde. Your sisters send you many kisses. Your brother begins to know your picture very well when we ask 'Where is Agnes' he points to it.

Jolimont Melbourne Port Phillip 29th January 1848

Well, my dearest Agnes, papa comes & says I must write a little more to you as he has not much time, so my letter will be quite topsy turvy. ...It is a long time since either you or tante Rose mentioned your music lessons. I should like very much to know how you get on in that, as well as in other things. Eleanor seems to be very earnest in her wish of learning & is very zealous in practising the *premier exercise*, which she does very well with both hands. You do not tell us either whether you take lessons in drawing or not. ...Your friends here are very well –Edith Howitt is growing quite a young lady, she is nearly 13 years old...

Jolimont Melbourne 1 January 1849

It is so long since we wrote to you my dearest child that I hardly know how to begin again – there are so many things to tell you, and papa says we must take a large sheet of paper and make a family letter of it, and I thought that I had better begin it today. We think more of you if possible today than on any other day and we pray God to bless and keep you and make you a good child and a faithful disciple of our Saviour. It is more than 6 weeks since I heard from dear Gd maman and of you, and we are a little anxious about receiving nothing as there are so many vessels in lately and dear Gd maman has always been so punctual with her good letters that I am afraid we are rather spoiled. I hope, if you are all spending this day together, that you are thinking of us as we are thinking of you.

We chose today, too, to pack a box for uncle Louis and a box for Tante Rose which contains some little things for you: a pair of slippers made by your two sisters, (they have been helped because the time was too short), a golden locket from papa and maman with hair of all of us to put in (we had not put them in here because they will do it much better in Neuchatel) and the Chinese Ivory seal. Tante Rose will find a daguerreotype of hers and Gd. Mama's picture. One for Edmond and one for George Tribolet. Also two of your Godmother's pictures - one I send to my Godson Alexander the other we send to Mrs Dupasquier. We ask you to take them to them from us with our kind regards and love. I hope aunt Rose will like her box which is made in stripes of the different pretty woods of this country. The tray inside is of Myall wood

which grows only about the Murray. It is a beautifully scented wood as you will discover. I hope all the things will reach you in good time and in good condition.

I should wish very much to hear soon both from you dear Agnes and from chère Tante Rose. We are anxious to know how you are getting on and if you are taking your lessons from Marie Coulon. We are very much at a loss what to do with your sisters here. Nelly still goes for three hours every morning to Mrs Conolly's but that cannot last. We much prefer it at home, with Cecile, and we try to find some trustworthy person to come here every day to teach them. I have tried again and again to do it myself but I am too often interrupted that nothing is done with regularity. Little Charley, who knew all his letters 9 months ago, has forgotten everything and does not show the least wish to learn anything. He knows a great many nursery rhymes. As he is three now we'll endeavour to try and begin in earnest. Your sisters will tell you that we had a Christmas tree on his birthday, as Christmas Eve was on a Sunday. And we had the 6 Lonsdales and their maman, Mrs Simpson, Mr and Mrs Browne and their three children (you do not know them), Edith Howitt and her little brother about 2 years old. It went off very well, and the little people were very happy and delighted. I must not forget to tell you that Mary Ann [former member of the household] was there too with her three children. She is going to live at Cape Otway, where her husband [Henry Bayles Ford] has been made lighthouse keeper. She comes often to enquire after you. All the children had an abundance of bon-bons such as they are here. They are very poor, though, compared to Switzerland. Each child had a present from Charley, who himself and his sisters had hardly any. There is no-one here to give them presents, and while papa and maman give them presents, they do not consider as such. Today we gave the little girls each a book and Charley a little charrette with which he is much delighted for today at least.

Lately we have had the pleasure of welcoming back to Port Phillip Mrs Stevens and her son, daughter-in-law and two little boys. Mr Powlett, who we had hoped would have gone to see you, but it seems that his health and the French revolution put a stop to the journey on the Continent that he had anticipated. We are rather disappointed that among so many acquaintances not one had managed to see you. It was a great pity especially as less than ever we can foresee when we shall next have the great joy to see you again, et tante Rose et chère Gd Maman.

In the meanwhile we shall be very glad to have your picture but when will it come? It seems that everything sent to us must remain for months in London before they are forwarded and we cannot at all understand the reason of it. Well, we must have patience but we shall be very thankful when it reaches us.

Next week we are expecting Mr and Mrs Bell to come and spend some weeks with us. Now we have got an abundance of room for guests, as we have put up the Heads cottage which you know has two good sized rooms. That which was the little store room is a drawing room, and that which we called the Nursery is the passage.

I hope dear Agnes you will have written to us from Oberhofen, or after your return, and given us a description of your excursion in the mountains where Uncle Fritz and Tante Louise were so kind to take you. It is a long time since already, yet I have not heard a word about it. Remember me kindly to all the ladies at La Rochette and I beg you to go and call on Madame Godot and give her a good kiss from me. I hope she is better than she was. I have so much to say, but I must leave some room for your sisters and little Charley too.

Jolimont Melbourne Port Phillip Australia
4th February 1850

I wish you could see Jolimont now - you would find it very much altered for the better - plants, trees and shrubs have grown so much that it looks quite pretty... We know you never forget the Lonsdales, Mrs Howitt... Edith who has grown quite a young lady - they could find

no likeness in your portrait at all. Mrs Lonsdale has had another little baby of whom Papa is Godfather. His name is Rupert La Trobe Lonsdale.

I want to tell you about Hannah, who went home with you, you know she came back again, with the Bishop and Mrs Perry, and was very desirous to come into my service to be with your sisters and the dear boy.

Jolimont 15th December 1850

Your sisters have taken a great deal of the two pages left to me to write to you my dear child. I do not like to let this year come to an end without saying a few words to you. How we wish another year could see us on our way to Europe and that we were permitted to see you once more and your dear grand maman, aunt Rose and all those we love. But it must be in this as in everything according to the will of God. He alone knows what is best for us. We were so pleased the other day to receive the letters written from La Bordelline by Uncle Gaston and Aunt Charlotte. It tells us of a great many things we wanted to know and it makes us happy to think that they have seen you and become acquainted personally. They appeared to be very much satisfied with their journey and their stay in dear Gd maman's house. They were going to Oberhofen and were to see you again on their return. So that we have pleasure in return, they promised to write another letter before they left Switzerland. It was a great pity that they could not take their daughter with them - it would have been a great pleasure both for her and for yourself would it not?

I cannot remember when I last wrote to you - the last letter mentioned in my book is of the 19th April, but I am almost certain to have written as much as twice during the winter. You will let me know by and by if I am not mistaken. Papa speaks to you about your picture which dear Gd.maman has the great kindness to send us. We are pleased with it and the more we look at it the more it recalls to our minds our own dear little Agnes whose face as she was 5 years ago when she left us - I shall never forget.

We shall soon have an opportunity to send you and dear Gd.maman the sketches of you and your sisters and brother by Mrs Stevens - the good old lady who is 76 years old is going back to England once more. It is only two years since she returned from Europe where she had gone two years before, but this time she goes quite by herself, leaving her son and daughter in law and two darling grandsons of whom she is so fond that I am very much astounded, but she has many other children and grandchildren and great grandchildren in England and she says she wants to see them once more. We are very sorry to lose her, as she is one of our few good friends here, and though we do not live in the same place yet we continued to see her occasionally and I was in constant correspondence with her. She has always been most kind and affectionate towards ourselves and our children. She remembers you well and always enquires after you and your improvement. We hope to see her here for a few days before she leaves for Sydney where she is going to embark in the same ship *The Waterloo* that brought her back to this colony two years ago. Your sisters are making a pair of warm slippers for the old lady's journey but they will have to make haste as we thought of it rather late.

They are all three very much delighted at the idea of having a tree on Christmas Eve - as yet we are not quite sure that we shall be able to fulfil what we almost promised - it is very difficult to find a tree of any kind and still - to find a good one and a fir tree as I should wish to have. And just now the weather has been so hot and suffocating that it makes one shrink from the very thought of it. However we will do it if we can do it well in any way. All the Lonsdales are coming, beginning with Alice, who is 15, to the little one who is nearly 18 months and the other little children. Edith Howitt is too much of the young lady now but there is a little boy who is about Charley's age. Here is Charley coming. I am trying to make him learn a hymn for dear papa on Christmas day but it is with the greatest difficulty that I can keep him for 10 minutes, but I hope that he will get it at last. I wished him very much to

be able to read on the anniversary of his birthday but he does not know much more than he did at the same time last year. I hope it will soon come.

My dearest child I am at the end of my paper. Kiss aunt Rose for me. I am sending a letter to Gd maman. Do not forget to remember me kindly to the ladies at La Rochette and kiss Mme Godot telling how much your papa and mama love her. May God bless you my dearest child and may you in the coming year give more satisfaction to your aunt than you have done hitherto. Many tender kisses from your loving mother, Sophie La Trobe

Jolimont Melbourne Victoria Australia
28 February 1851

...I must tell you that your dear papa is absent from Jolimont having been obliged to go to Sydney...I feel quite lonely and your sisters and brother hardly know what to do without dear papa, even though they do not see much of him at all times, as he is always very much engaged and will be henceforth more than ever. You know we are likely to be separated from you for some years longer – that is to say, if Aunt Rose will consent to keep you and do for you what she has done hitherto – in short be a mother to you. It is very painful, very hard to bear, but we feel that it is the only way to secure to you the advantage of a good education – praying that God in his mercy may allow us to meet again, after so long a separation.

Jolimont Melbourne Victoria Australia
August 30th 1851

I will let Papa speak to you about the alterations made in the house and garden. It is not very probable that we will leave Jolimont before a Government House is built – and perhaps it will not be finished in our time – but we do not know at all events, it is not commenced yet – the grounds are not even fenced.

Jolimont 23 January 1852

I suppose papa tells you how much those gold discoveries have given him to do – how harassed and worried he feels at times. But thank God, who keeps him in good health and in strength of mind and heart. For a week towards the end of the year I got very anxious about papa – he had lost his appetite, his sleep, in part – and for a week, or a fortnight we never saw a smile on his face – you know, that is not like him – but thanks be to God – he seems quite himself again, and goes to work with courage, though he is surrounded by difficulties on every side.

We have got a shawl made by the sister-in-law of Mrs A. McCrae (the same who took the likeness of you and your sisters and brother) who resides in the Shetland Islands. Papa sends you a very pretty specimen of gold and quartz.

... all the menservants – they all went to the diggings. The garden suffers much from the want of a gardener and yet we are still pretty well off – as in some families they have lost every one of their servants – males and females! This wretched gold country!

Mrs Lonsdale has got another little boy about a month ago – she has now 5 sons and 3 daughters. Edith Howitt is quite well, and quite a young lady now. William Howitt is gone to England about a year ago to study la medicine. A propos – that makes me think that Mrs Gilbert brought me a letter for you the other day. She and Mr Gilbert never forget you – your sisters and brother spent an afternoon with her the other day - Mrs Gilbert is now living on the other side of the river not far from the botanical gardens.

Jolimont 2 April 1852

Had I known beforehand that our separation was to be such a long one, I do not know that I would ever have made up my mind to send you away from us. As it is we must think that is all for the best and if it is for your ultimate good, I shall never regret it – notwithstanding all the pangs it has cost me and still does cost me. I should have so much wished to be with you before this time – and yet it cannot be...

Jolimont 12 July 1852

Your dear papa is still as busy as ever he can be. His head gets but little rest even in the night, so much he has to think about official business – most of the time of an unpleasant kind – and I see so little of him that sometimes it makes me quite unhappy – and every year I am hoping that if it is God's will, it will be the last of that kind of life in this country and so far from all those who are dear to us.

Jolimont January 1st 1853

Dear Papa has ended the year by writing to you, my dearest Agnes- and I will begin the new one by doing the same – and praying that if it is His will we may meet and see each other before many months are over. I need not tell you dear child that if the joy to see you will be great – the prospect of having to leave your dear papa, on this side of the world, is a very sorrowful and grievous one to me – and if I had been allowed to choose, I would have much preferred waiting for him that we might all meet again together – but it is not to be. What will Charley and his two sisters say when they know that they are to leave this country to go to Europe and see their dear sister Agnes? I think they will only be half pleased at first as they always say they would not like to leave their dear Jolimont and their native country... I will wait to the last moment to close this letter... In the meantime God bless you dear child.

2. Letters of Sophie La Trobe to Susan Meade (Norton), governess, 1844-1848

Source: Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS 11382

Friday morning, 26th April [1844?]

My dear Miss Meade

Do you think we have forgotten you ? or have your forgotten us ? – Will you come to see me to day, as you return from Richmond. You will give great pleasure to a real friend of yours.

Sophie La Trobe

Translated from French

Shortland Bluff 23 January 1845

I hope, my dear Miss Meade, that you have been well since you left us, and that you have found your sister safe and sound. Do not think that I bear the slightest grudge against you for what happened. I attribute it all to the delicacy of your nerves, and I would hope that the air and sea-bathing will strengthen them. The children have been better and better since you left. Baby [Cécile] is becoming too plump, and Nelly has regained so very much of her gaiety and good humour.

Mr La Trobe returned to me last Sunday, but he has already been called back today, which hardly pleases me. I am sending you the two arms of the armchair with the wool which Mrs Airey sent me, which is only sufficient to finish one. She has some more of a darker shade which might do for the other. But still I do not know – perhaps it might be better if you waited and saw it all together. If you prefer to do the arms in a design of united yellows and greys and other colours which are in the design, I leave it to you to do as you please, and perhaps go to the house and tell Charlotte [housekeeper Mrs Charlotte Pellet] to let you into the drawing-room, where you will find the basket under the table with all the wools in it, just as I left it. At the same time you can see the three portraits of the little ones, which are also in the drawing-room.

A thousand pardons, dear Miss Meade, for this horrible scrawl, but I have a dreadful pen and dreadful ink, and little time.

Thus it only remains to bid you farewell in haste, assuring you of my friendship always.

Sophie La Trobe

My compliments to Mrs Gill [sister of Miss Meade]

Baby says 'Mi gone'.

(Addressed to Miss Meade, Flinders Street, Melbourne)

Thursday evening [1845?]

My dear Miss Meade

As there is some little time left will you be kind enough to see whether you can match these colours at Marsden & take the quantity you think will be sufficient for Agnes' work. – Will you at the same time get two or three or 4 worsted needles which will do for her. –

I am as usual very much obliged to you and am quite ashamed of the trouble I give you.

Yours very truly

S. La Trobe

Hobart Town, V.D.L. 20th January 1847

My dear Miss Meade

I write by the first opportunity since I received your letter and yet I do not know if this will still find you in Port Phillip. I should be very sorry to let you go without a word of remembrance from me, but I did not know sooner that you were leaving for England so I was expecting any day to hear from you. For my sake I am very sorry at your not staying in Australia, but for yours I cannot but rejoice having always thought that nothing would restore your health and your spirits, but return to your country and family and I hope that such will be the case. I assure you I shall often miss you and my little girls still more. They are quite well, growing tall, and thinner and send much love to dear Miss Meade to whom Eleanor is always talking to go to school when she goes back to Port Phillip. They are very anxious to see Jolimont again, and I suppose we shall not be detained much longer in V. D. Land as the Governor is expected any day – but of course nobody knows whether it will be today, tomorrow, or in a week or two or three – but we are ready to dislodge at a day's or two notice – of course it makes us feel very unsettled and uncomfortable, & I shall be glad to find again rest and quiet in our dear little home, especially if the summer is far advanced enough to have nothing to fear from the heat. The dear boy is quite well, though having

suffered a good deal from his teeth which are coming on very slowly indeed, but now he runs quite alone, and is in general very good tempered and tries very hard to talk.

But, my dear Miss Meade, I have no courage going on writing to you when I think that probably my letter will be too late, so I can only say good bye and God bless you, and grant you to be happy once more in this world – if you are not gone pray write to me again to say when and by which vessel you sail, and may I hope that once in Europe again you will be kind enough to let me hear from you and of your safe arrival among your friends. If ever I am permitted to see Europe again and if I visit your part of England, I shall certainly go and enquire after you, so be sure to send me your address. –Remember me to Mrs Gill, pray. Mr La Trobe wants me to send you his best wishes and prayers for your propitious voyage and for your happiness – do believe me, chère Miss Meade.

Yours sincerely always
S. La Trobe.

Translated from French

Jolimont, Friday morning [1847?]

I think it would be wiser, my dear Miss Meade, to send you an invitation to come and drive with us today, Friday. Otherwise I fear very much that we shall not have the pleasure of seeing you at all before your departure.

Mr La Trobe instructed me to tell you not to worry about your return this evening, that he will have great pleasure in escorting you himself. It is not necessary to send a reply, for you will come early if you are coming, certainly well before 6 o'clock. If not I would know there is something preventing you. I am telling you this because the bearer of this note is not coming back here but is going on to town. I await in hopes that we shall have the pleasure of seeing you.

Yours
S. La Trobe

Jolimont 15th September 1848

My dear Mrs Norton

It was with great pleasure that I received your letter three days ago - & that I saw you had not forgotten your friends in Melbourne, which I really had begun to fear. I would not have put such a long interval between my two inquiries at your sister's about you if I had not been very ill for nearly 4 months, most of which time I was confined to my bed, in to the house on a sofa. I have been, thank God, much better for some time but I have not as yet recovered my normal health and do not know whether I shall ever recover it. You are not forgotten amongst us I assure you. Eleanor especially has been talking a great deal of you during the winter and has even written many letters to Mrs Norton – at least many have been commenced, but none finished. She is exceedingly fond of writing letters and we cannot give her greater pleasure than to let her into pen and paper and let her write which she always does entirely by herself. She is going to school at Mrs Connolly's but it is only till I have been able to find someone to come and teach them both at home. They are a great number at Mrs Conolly's and I do not think that is at all fit for Eleanor, she improved more in three months with you, than in 6 at Mrs Conolly's – so you may well think that we regret you very much, on that account as well as on others. I was glad to hear from your sister that you were so well again – cheerful and in good spirits – I am sure that your living in the country in the middle of occupations, which I suppose recognize activity and heuresse must be a great deal better for you than your sedentary way of living in Melbourne.

I have very good news from and of Agnes, though she is in the middle of Revolutions, but I am happy to say, up to the date of the last letter, all was going on quietly and that is more than we could hope, in the dreadful state of disturbance in which Europe appears to be. Poor child: we thought that surely this year would see us on our way home to her, but there is not the least chance of it, hitherto, and we live in the same state of uncertainty in which we have been living for the last two years. You would be surprised to see little Charley. Now he has grown he looks more like a boy of 4 years old and he still will not be 3 till Christmas, as you know.

It is possible that during the summer I shall have to go somewhere for change of air, and if it is at Geelong, as it appears most probable, I hope to have the pleasure to see you, and to see you once more looking well and happy.

I will let Eleanor thank you herself for the Platypus you sent her. Little Cécile asks to be remembered to Mrs Norton and Mr La Trobe joins with me in many kind regards.

Yours always sincerely,

S. La Trobe

3. Letter of Sophie La Trobe to Anne Russell Ker, governess, ca. 1849

Source: Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS 57760, 78/5(c)

Jolimont Friday morning

My dear Miss Ker

I am sorry to tell you that Lili [Eleanor, known as Nelly] is now laid up with Scarlet fever so that you must necessarily take a holiday till you hear from us again, which I hope will be soon.

Yours very truly

S. La Trobe

I shall of course let you know ----

(Envelope addressed to Miss Ker, Collingwood)

Index to letters <http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/documents/SophieLettersindex.pdf>