
D 8001(L)

Letters from Herrman Koeppen, 1851-1865

Introduction and translation by Rosemary Radden, 2006

Notes on the translation

In this fascinating collection of letters written by a German migrant – Hermann Köppen – who arrived in Adelaide in 1851, we read of a young man who sees a young woman in the street. He is attracted to her immediately and thus starts a friendship which eventually leads to marriage. At first, he has little money, as he continues to send money to his mother in Germany, and feels that it is essential that he must be able to provide evidence that he has sufficient means to be able to support a wife and family, before proposing marriage to her. He therefore sets out for the Victorian gold fields in search of his fortune.

The original letters are written in ‘old German’ – [explanation??], which were translated by Nora Haenel into ‘new German’. The English translation was worked primarily from the ‘new German’ version, although reference was made to the original where there were gaps in this first translation.

It is important to realise that there is a difference between the way in which people communicate with other people, a difference reflected not only in the changes over time, but also by differences between cultures, religions, the wealth (or lack) of individuals and the level of education.

When we move back in time, therefore, we need to consider that there is a particular style of expression used during each period, which reflects the expectations, manners, and approved social behaviour favoured by that group. This is often very different from the language and style used by the contemporary reader and speaker, and this fact needs to be considered when reading letters from another epoch and background culture.

In these letters, we are looking at the prose written by an educated German speaker who came from a society very different from that of 21st century Australia. His first letter reflects his hesitancy in approaching a young lady whom he scarcely knew but whose appearance attracted his attention on the first occasion he saw her, in the street. The original first letter in German is written as was considered appropriate at that time in Europe to “Dear Miss” without first or family names. Any use of another form of introduction in these circumstances would have been considered impolite and forward. As the relationship develops the style becomes much more personal, but the letters still appear very formal to our eyes. The fact that his family background was unknown and that he apparently had no formal letter of introduction to the Ohlmeyer family itself, would also be to his disadvantage. He must have been handsome and presented himself well to be received as a suitor under these circumstances!

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28th July 1851

My dear Miss Ohlmeyer,

Filled with the deepest and most honourable feelings of the highest esteem for you, dear Fraulein, I find it impossible to bear the pangs of uncertainty within me any longer. Immediately after my arrival in this colony I saw you in Robert Street and felt incredibly happy to show my respect for you with a modest greeting every time. Already at that time a deeper feeling for you was stirring in my breast, but as I was alone, foreign and without means in this country I had to lock these feelings away inside me. With endless diligence and persistent, indefatigable activity I have now reached the stage of establishing my own secure existence; but my fortune is still only very modest, for I lack my Ideal, she who is resolved to share joy and sorrow with me. As I have recently succeeded in observing you more closely and in learning to know you better so the feeling of deepest respect has developed into inexpressible love.

Marvelling at my boldness I can no longer refrain from speaking out clearly and place my fate in your hands in offering to you my hand and heart.

Unfortunately I do not know how to reply to this question. I possess neither spiritual nor physical advantages which raise me in front of others, even if I possessed great wealth that would not influence your choice in my favour. I am only a simple, honest man of whom there are so many.

And yet you are the one to whom I offer my love and I desire nothing at all for it, but your heart and hand.

Only the boundless respect and the inexpressible love I have for you, dearest Fraulein, can excuse such presumption. The firm conviction I have that no one can recognise and esteem your superior character and exceedingly admirable qualities better than I, urges me to reveal my love to you and to ask for a response to it. Complacent opinions about myself should not be the means of gaining your love for myself, I submit myself gladly and willingly to your judgement. Search your heart seriously to see if it can beat for me, consider carefully our mutual circumstances in order to decide if you could be satisfied with life at my side and then pronounce that decisive word that can make me either the most fortunate or most unfortunate of all the inhabitants of Australia: but whatever the decision it will never extinguish the feelings of the most inexpressible love and respect in the heart of

Your sincere admirer
H. Köppen

D 8001/2(L)

Melbourne
17th December, 1851

My dearest Hannchen,

After a good journey lasting 4 days, dear Hannchen, we arrived safely in Melbourne. Our journey was good, Amalie has proved to be a good dancer. A thousand thoughts of you dearest Hannchen occupied me during the journey, and a dark premonition of misfortune exercised my mind during the whole journey. I boarded the ship with little hope and I am going to the diggings with little hope, as we have not yet been able to find a cart. There is great excitement in Melbourne, everyone is afflicted by gold fever. Several Germans whom I have met have given us great hopes and in most stores lie large plates full of gold on show, and not only small pieces but great lumps.

Yet what use is life, I still have nothing. Hopefully I will still find something, if only the water does not run out. God give me a little luck and I will soon have enough money for the wedding. If I find something, dear Hannchen, I will return soon to get married and you will come with me to Melbourne for the time being. Indeed, man proposes and God disposes; I am chattering here and do not yet know what I can do. Near by the seats are full of excited people; I can scarcely collect my thoughts as my head is whirling about so much.

Enclosed you will find a few pages from the diary, although I do not know whether you will be able to read them.

Remain true to me Hannchen, just as I will not stop loving you as much as ever and to see each other again will compensate us richly for our separation. Give everyone all my warmest greetings, I will write more from the diggings. Your thoughts will be my talisman and make me happy. You yourself will then be the crown of my happiness.

Goodbye then my dear, beloved Hannchen and keep loving
Your faithful Köppen.

D 8001/3(L)

Mount Alexander,
25th. December, 1851

My deeply loved Hannchen,

Sitting on a fallen tree with a view of unusual brightness and with a few gumtrees in the background, I gaze through the Venetian window blinds made out of bark in our hut and reflect on the first day of the Christmas Festival. On this day three years ago I spoke to my mother for the first time about emigrating. My imagination was at that time still more active than now, I expected to find Heaven in Australia, not much was lacking and I was now in possession of my Self. Last Christmas I spent happily in the company of some friends and already 10 weeks ago I delighted in thoughts for this Christmas when the day was to be, beloved Hannchen, on which you and I were to be united for ever. But man proposes and God disposes: instead of lying on my nuptial bed, I am on a hard dirty straw mattress and instead of being united with you, dear Hannchen, I am more than a hundred miles away, and yet very near to you in my thoughts. I am used to spending my Christmas Eve in a better way than my usual evenings, last night the damper was not to my taste, sadly I went to bed early and could not go to sleep for a long time, my heart was in Adelaide with you and my dear family in Germany from whom I have still received no news: I was very depressed. Hopefully you will have received my first double Dutch letter from Melbourne, and yet I must apologise deeply for this letter, firstly I was seasick only on the land, that is, everything oscillated within me and there was a current in the room and on the table that could drive someone mad. It was too much for my weak mind to write a good letter under such circumstances, upset as I was. Please forgive me for that, my dear Hannchen.

As I have already said, I have already informed you of my fortunate arrival in Melbourne but now it's far off and from now our luck is diminishing. After a long, useless to- and- fro quarrel a party of 16 Germans assembled at last and hired a horse dray which took a load of 18 T. to bring us enviably towards the new Eldorado. After a good meal the procession started off at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in order to make camp the same day, 10 miles further on. A large piece of linen was stretched out between two trees, a good fire was lit and the group lay down cheerfully around it. The evening passed with singing and games even with performances of plays, and so many a one who spoke cleverly, wished all the more to be back in Adelaide the next day. The next morning at dawn after little sleep the cheerful gold diggers got up and marched off vigorously. The road now went over a waterless plain for 25 miles, which to many seemed long and to the Germans appeared depressing. At last we found a water hole and we encamped. The biggest "loud mouths" were becoming very subdued, many a one dreamed of giving up and more regretted bitterly that they had left Adelaide. Then it emerged that the returning crowds were all complaining about the lack of water. Then the driver came and said that we still had a long way to go and that it was time to set out. The vast, beautiful Black Forest lay in front of me and such a welcome change was a pleasure to the eyes. We brought the "loud mouths" with much trouble to the site of our overnight stop which consisted of only a small ribbon of a few water holes. All the desire for song and theatre had passed this evening and a few could scarcely wait for teatime so great was their exhaustion. On the third day, we marched a short distance and also found more water, but there the horse seemed somewhat distressed, so it was decided to set up an overnight camp once again. The day passed with conversations among the groups interrupted by the shouting of a few loud mouths and some squabblers among the group and on Sunday early about 10 in the morning we succeeded in reaching

the harbour of gold. About midday I went to see Wilhelm and as he like A Beyer wanted to accept another companion for the time being, I decided to join in with them and live with them in a tent. After three days of hard work, we have obtained a share of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an ounce of gold and I hope greatly for an even better yield. I refrain from making any judgement about the coming or not coming here, but observe that the work is very hard and that Mr Unmack from Adelaide has already given up any hope of gold after 10 strokes of the pickaxe. Rötning, Voyer {Vogel?}, Wagner etc. certainly wish that they could be with their wives. Hochreuther is still ill in Melbourne; he will still be scratching his head about it however. I do not know when I will return to Adelaide though. If I am lucky, which I scarcely still expect, nevertheless, may it happen soon; otherwise I will defy bad luck only for a time. The shoemaker Schorsch is very ill and it is questionable whether he will see Adelaide again. Dearest Hannchen you can imagine how much I would like to be with you; one must remain abandoned and lost for some time to rise again, like a rudderless ship which after a long search will have found a safe anchorage. Nevertheless I expect to come very soon and for ever into your arms. This time I have to send to you in writing my very best wishes for your birthday as well as for a good New Year; I am still searching for the yield in the earth with which I will be able to congratulate you personally. Sincere greetings to your father, mother, your brothers and sisters and friends, to all I hope that the New Year might heal the wounds that the old year inflicted so cruelly. In accordance with our agreement my dear Hannchen I can surely hope for a really long letter; that is the only distraction which can be offered to me in this lively wilderness. Therefore, dear Hannchen, do not let me wait too long for your answer, think of me sometimes and you will bring me luck. Separation is hard, but meeting again will be all the happier; it certainly guides us to the objective of our aspirations to bear joy and sorrow, to be strong in misfortune and unassuming in good luck and so whatever may happen our love and trust will not be shaken. Farewell for a short time my dear Hannchen, I will write again at the New Year: but until then think of

Your faithful Hermann
Köppen

Yet more good wishes and a thousand kisses to you
my beloved

D 8001/4(L)

Mount Alexander. ? 1. 1852

Dearly beloved Hannchen!

I am writing this my third letter, dear Hannchen, in a better mood and with better prospects at the present time than when I wrote the others. Your name was a good talisman, allow me to keep it for ever and you will go in front of me like a shining star.

Since my last letter I have settled into an orderly life; after a short illness lasting two days on which I was unable to work I feel quite well so far! The food tastes good with the hard work and the evening passes in thoughts of you my dear Hannchen. Life here is indeed fairly steady and one hears nothing of romantic adventures so therefore it would not be completely uninteresting for you to have a true description of our life.

If you go along about 9 English miles into the diggings, you will find on the left in a flat glen a large tent made out of bark with a bell; this is a church, next to it and behind it are a few tents and huts, in the next to last one of these are the families of Beyer, Ohlmeyer, Marggraf and Köppen to be found. Our tent is a piece of sailcloth hung over a post, the back wall is a country view of Brazil's most beautiful areas, that is to say, with gum trees and logs intertwined. The front or the entrance is cleverly adorned and practically designed. In the middle is a large opening where a cloth will be hung which will act as a door, to the left and the right are vertical pieces of gum bark serving as shutters and at the same time vents and windows. Our hearth is about 12 feet from the hut, in fact only an upturned{blank} in which August and Wilhelm had their first success. On the other side of it as a change one sees bush, trees, a few brush huts and rocks and it is possible to think that one is in Saxon Switzerland. The wretchedness of the hut's exterior belies the surprise of a glance into the interior; here one discovers comfort and cleanliness and the expression on the faces reveals distinctly the success of the day, so that one can easily tell whether they have been able to find something or not. On the left in front of the entrance stands the case of a cradle, but not that of a child's cradle but that of a washing machine; a few vertical sheets of metal separate them and form a food cupboard. Sugar and coffee, tea and lights, crackers and combs lie at peace in company upon and next to each other, a few smashed bottles and broken teapots, pickaxes, shovels, shoes and lamps form an excellent battalion and are awake, true to the fatherland. On the right hand stands another cradle case which serves as table, chair, footstool and so on, behind there is the sugar bag, box of butter, boots, pipes for tobacco, bags of food, dirty washing and the sacks of flour next to a few small drying cloths, hand towels, dirty socks and a boot- jack. From the entry or living room you come into the bedroom; a large transverse gumtree trunk forms the dividing wall and prevents the Jacob's feathers from spreading through the living room. The room is filled up with a mattress and various, not very neatly folded covers lying there and dirty washing, a song- book, a few ...?...

and some old sacks. If you get dirty, you wash yourself in front of the hut, for here the water has to be carried a long way, and so it is very precious, you can comb your hair if you want to: but clothes are not brushed and our tent has not yet been swept.

D 8001/5(L)

Mount Alexander. 11.1.52

Last Sunday I was interrupted by the visit of our newly arrived Germans, among whom was Uhlemann, and this was the reason why, dear Hannchen, I have not written to you every Sunday as promised.

However what's the point of taking out time with apologies, you are certainly yourself so convinced of your merit, that one is unable to forget you and to further this all the more, I ask you, dear Hannchen, to break (?) with Doctor Beyer; with God's help I am coming to Adelaide in 14 days or 3 weeks time with Wilhelm and Ag. Beyer. We are all three up to the present time when there is more water again, cured and delighted!-!

Rejoice with me beloved Hannchen and my joy is doubled, I can scarcely wait for the time when I rush into your arms. My health seems to be very poor; a cold and cough take more of my strength than work; and with the various changes our household has presently become a very monotonous one. Last Sunday I was interrupted in my description of our life, I will therefore try to pick up the thread again and continue with the description.

We get up tolerably early at daybreak, when Wilhelm acts as the domestic cockerel. After he has called three times instead of crowing, he fetches water and lights a fire. After a few repeated calls August and Köppen get out of bed or rather out of their ?..... boxes, yawn, stagger and at last after much searching find the comb and the washing bowl. Breakfast consists of strong coffee (not family coffee), damper or pancakes, thereupon we go to work. We sit in a hole 3 feet wide and 2 1/2 feet high, one, hunched up like a frog, works the stone away from in front, whilst another fills the bucket and the third pulls it up; occasionally too just one works, the other must carry away the earthy sandy substance in a sack on his back for an English mile and the third crouches in the water and washes; glancing sometimes with pleasure sometimes with dissatisfaction into the small pan after the journey to see whether it is productive or not worth while. After so many drops of sweat, we are reminded from the position of the sun, that it is time to prepare lunch. This excursion is going with varying success, yet it seems to me almost as if August and I are at times left out. It is enriching to do the cooking, then all the washing of the utensils, where no magnifying glass is needed to see the dirt sticking, to clean the meat, which becomes alive very quickly, and to cook and roast it. In the meantime, both the other travellers come back from the hole, stretch out again and after a long reflection during which August has the most patience, one or the other gives a hand. The food is fairly good, although all three of us are not particular about a little burning. So, for example, Köppen blackens the pancakes; August carbonises the roast mutton and Wilhelm allows the rice to burn. Generally we laugh and scoff and the food too is better every day. We still have four weeks at the diggings and then on our return to Adelaide, we want to found a cooking institute in which for a good remuneration everyone will be taught to cook a lot with a little and to transform a lot into less. However I am getting away from my description. Shortly after the meal, we return to work and the monotony continues until evening, when the common evening meal is prepared. After the meal, the gold is cleaned and divided (if we have found some, otherwise not) and with tales from stories which bring joy to children, the company goes to sleep. On Sundays we recover from our toil, get up, have our once weekly wash methodically, have breakfast, then wash the sweat out of the dirty washing, repair the torn items, write letters, cook, sleep, eat, run around a little and then lie down to sleep again. It must be very boring for all those who do not have a loved one at home, for with what do they dispel their little idle time? My thoughts are with you then, my beloved Hannchen, and I think strongly too that you will not forget me. Please give my warmest greetings to all your family and to your friends too. If I am not ill, which I hope God will prevent, I

will be in Adelaide again in 3 weeks in order to be united forever. Hochreuter will certainly give you my greetings; he has tried his luck and found it too, and Köppen has prattled about nothing untrue to him.

Wilhelm is hale and hearty, even cooking meat with cabbage and yellow carrots. August is resting, snatched from his present Sunday sleep on the Jacobs feathers. Both send their warmest greetings and are coming with me. (the following lines are badly affected by staining.) But for now, take care my dear Hannchen with hope for the day of your departure the future compensates for and heals the wounds has inflicted.

Once more my warmest greetings my dear Hannchen from

Your

faithful ,H. Köppen

D 8001/6(L)

To: Mrs T. Köppen
care of Mr A. Beyer
Freeman Street Adelaide

Melbourne, 14th October,
1852

My beloved wife!

After a very good journey lasting 6 days, my dear Hannchen, I have arrived safely in Melbourne. Our ship and our journey was (sic.) very good, even if not very speedy. My thoughts are with you dear Hannchen, please God that I am lucky and am able to come home quickly. At this moment I do not yet know where we are going, probably to Ballarat. As soon as I have arrived there, I will write to you directly and will soon have the pleasure of an answer. I hope that everything is going very well at home and with God's help we will see each other again healthy and well. Give my warmest greetings to Father and all the others as well as my sister-in law Reinhardt and remember with love

Your
faithful husband
H. Köppen

Forgive my haste, my thoughts are with you and if I had already had some good luck I would have flown into your arms on the wings of the wind. Once again my greetings and a thousand kisses to you.

Your Hermann

Burmeister sends his greetings to his wife.

D 8001/7(L)

Ballarat Diggings,
24th October, 1852.

To Mrs T. Köppen.
C/o Mr A. Beyer, Grocer.

Freeman Street
Adelaide,
South Australia.

Dearly beloved Hannchen!

You will have learned of my pleasant journey to Melbourne from my last letter from Melbourne. The journey, whilst certainly not the quickest, was nevertheless a very good, healthy and cheerful one, and we arrived at Mr Niemann's last Thursday. First we discussed our choice of destination and the majority agreed on Ballarat. On Saturday we left the city and travelled by steamer to Geelong. At 1 o'clock in the afternoon we arrived and at once travelled a further seven miles where we remain overnight. The following day we travelled twenty-four miles and on the third day a further twenty miles to the small village of Bonnion. On the fourth day about midday we arrived at the place of our choice, a new diggings known as Eureka. On the last night we were surprised by a gentle rain though the warmth of the fire allowed us to dry out. The most unpleasant feature of the journey was carrying my pack, which was much too heavy for me. I travelled in the company of thirteen men, all German, among whom were Burmeister, Feder, Görs, Kühmel, Emtke, and Bockmanns and still more holy men. If I could keep my thoughts at a distance from Adelaide, the journey would have been quite cheerful for me; for me alone, Hannchen, there lies no pleasure in what I cannot share with you. However I must come back to my journey again. First we bought a tent and things, all of which is very expensive. Burmeister, Görs, Feder and I live together and in pairs prepare a hole. Unfortunately the prospects are very uncertain and the holes very deep. In the place where I am the holes range from the most superficial at forty feet in depth to the deepest at seventy feet. A few succeed brazenly, but the majority find nothing at all. I am not despondent since I have you, my dear Hannchen, you have become my lucky angel and furthermore from now on too you will be my lucky angel. My thoughts are with you my beloved Hannchen, I cannot describe to you with what longing I think of you. Please God that I may soon be lucky, so that I can hurry quickly into the arms of my beloved wife. Do not despair, good fortune will not abandon you and the star of reunion cheerfully encourages me.

I hope that you are really well I too enjoy good health and my constant prayer for you, my beloved Hannchen, is that nothing will happen to you. Give my warmest greetings to Bungerts, Father and Mother, all the brothers and sisters-in-law. What is Wilhelm doing as an occupation; A. Beyer has still not arrived, I believe that he may well not arrive. I have sent by post to the Mount the letters entrusted to me, hopefully they will all arrive at their correct destination. Write to me in full detail and by return post about all that happens in Adelaide, especially in regard to our house and register the letter so that it may arrive more surely. Above all, do not delay, so that I may yet receive the letter, and chiefly to have news about your state of health, for I do not know how much longer I will remain in the same place.

My address is:
Mr H Köppen
Care of Mr G. Wright

Eureka Diggings
Ballarat
Melbourne.

The country is very beautiful here and very fertile from Geelong on; the streets too, with few exceptions, are quite good. Women are in the majority here and here life is active. When I am by myself, I often wonder why I am in a bad mood and anxious, but my thoughts always come back to you, to you my dear Hannchen, without you I have only a half life and occasionally I am not contented, just as I was earlier as a bachelor. Give my warmest greetings to good sister-in-law Reinhardt and her good little daughter Anna, and I ask her once again to care for you well, and if I am not yet there, to look after you well during your confinement. Take care of yourself, my dear Hannchen, do not worry about me. I desist from putting myself in any deliberate danger and remain healthy and your true husband, just as I will never cease to be

Your loving husband
H. Köppen

D 8001/8(L)

Eureka Diggings
Ballarat

Sunday, 29th October, 1852

To Mrs T. Köppen
Care of Mr A. Beyer, Grocer
Freeman Street
Adelaide

Deeply beloved dear Hannchen!

It is a man's duty to work and to provide for his own, and this is the reason which compels him under the existing circumstances to leave his own family, and it is the feeling of intense love for you, dearest Hannchen, which leaves me to disagree sometimes with the man's duties. In the knowledge of being loved sincerely by a faithful wife and of the same feelings of the man for his wife, it makes it a difficult condition, on account of the pure profit, to leave a wife and yet it is the way of the world.

When I come back at midday or in the evening tired from work, no friendly hand rejoins mine, no welcoming kiss spices the good time (i.e. das Mal = time, occasion. Das Mahl = meal. 'spices the good meal'?). The mutton meat will be roasted in dirty implements and there is damper with the food. We have been at the Diggings almost fourteen days but there is no gold yet to be seen, and the monotonous food, which I have just described, makes life not at all attractive. Fortunately we are in a good tent which has a bark floor, without which we would have had to bath in filth during the recent incessant wet weather. We made bedsteads out of planks which served as mattresses when covered with a sack of leaves; but the most imperfect feature of the whole business, my dear Hannchen, is that you are not at my side. My sleep is increasingly troubled by the lack of any friendly word or any happy news from you, my dear Hannchen. Yet I cannot deny that the winning of a better future for us and our little offspring is intended and from now on you will be my dear guiding angel. Hopefully Good Fortune will not forget me completely and a little success will come about for us. For that dear Hannchen, think of me from time to time, in my free time my thoughts are constantly with you; For the intellectual conversation of my tent companions provides little variety for me. Feder, Gors, Burmeister and I are still together in the tent, forming two groups, but we have heard or seen nothing of A. Beyer.

Last Sunday I sent a letter to you dear Hannchen, Burmeister as well, hopefully my letters have arrived and I eagerly await an answer. Write to me in great detail about how you are, my dear Hannchen, what the houses look like, what all the relations and friends of the Adelaide Diggers (Diggings) are doing – My address is

Mr H Köppen
Care of G. Wright's Store
Eureka, Ballarat Diggings,
Melbourne

Mr Burmeister sends his warmest greetings to his wife and asks if she has received the letter of 24th.

I have not yet learnt anything of Reinhardt, but greet his wife and my good little Anna, likewise Father, Mother and all relations.

If by any chance a letter should come for me there from Germany, write out the letter and send me the copy, but be careful not to hand over the original. I cannot describe to you the longing I have for a letter. Our life here is very monotonous and I only wish for a few pounds weight in order to hurry into your arms on the wings of the wind. Love is no empty delusion and separation allows love to be really clearly perceived in all its dimensions. I would to God, my dear Hannchen, that if I were not yet able to be there at your confinement, that it passed safely and we will find each other again joyful and bright. If no special circumstances arise, this is the last journey to the Diggings, to Melbourne and after that we will never again be separated by such a great distance. We and our family will live united then hard-working and busy and none of us, even with troubled fortune, shall spoil our life of heaven. So do not despair, the time of our reunion is perhaps distant no more and God will let us find each other again in a healthy state. My health is quite good, the food tastes excellent to me and I only trust that you too, dear Hannchen, are active and in good spirits. If I have time I will write to you again next Sunday, this is a small compensation for our separation, to be able to share my thoughts and feelings with you even if only imperfectly. Write to me also very often and in detail, every time that I receive news from you will be a day of rejoicing. For now however, take care of yourself my beloved Hannchen, think of me with love, as I will never cease to love you

Your
faithful husband
H. Köppen

4th letter

Eureka Ballarat Diggings
7th Nov. 1852

To Mrs J. Köppen
Care of Mr A Beyer, Grocer
Freeman Street, Adelaide.

Most beloved Hannchen,

Remembering my promise I take up my pen once more to write a few words to you dear Hannchen. As I am hale and hearty I wish the same for you from my heart. I have not yet found any gold, nevertheless one must not allow one's spirit to fail, and when one is healthy and has enough to eat, one has to be quite content at the Diggings. The worst thing so far is that everything is rather dear and unfortunately I for my part have had to pay out £ 20 already, yet now everything will be cheaper and hopefully a good hole must compensate for everything. My dear Hannchen, how often have I wished for a few more pounds in weight in order to able to return to your arms soon. And with God's help the time will shortly come to be reunited with you again, my dear Hannchen. A. Beyer has still not arrived and it is much the same if he really followed, went up to another Diggings. You will certainly write to me soon of anything new that has happened, likewise everything about our dwelling, hopefully not much nuisance involved with that.

Here on Friday evening, the day on which the English Parliament should have been blown up in the air, life was very animated, everything around here was lit up, the most frightful fires were burning everywhere and a shot and shouts of Hurra so furious as it could only have been in the Battle of Leipzig. It was truly incredibly lively.

Dear Hannchen I look forward to the day of our reunion with longing and no out of town diggings is to separate us any more. I am already rejoicing that I am to be united again with you dear Hannchen; this is only the 5th part of life, when one is separated from one's family. Yet it is not to be denied, it does not suit anyone, and the harder the separation, the more joyful the reunion; all the more as I can then with God's help greet our little stranger. Sister-in law Reinhardt is certainly quite active with her little daughter and both thrive in the city air as well as in the country. Mr Emke is also still hale and hearty and sends his greetings to Jettchen.. My warmest greetings to father, mother, Bungerts, ? Loub, Wilhelm and Carl, and I heartily wish the group at the diggings more luck than I have had up to now. If letters arrive, write them out and send them to me, but keep the originals, as it is very fortuitous to receive a letter here. My address is
To Mr H. Köppen
Care of Mr G. Wright, Store
Eureka Ballarat Diggings
Melbourne.

17th October.
(should be November. R.R.)

Again 8 days have passed without anything extraordinary happening; the work is still hard and the holes very deep, but with that my entire find is only 9 pence in weight. Nevertheless it is not to be denied that the old God is still alive and will not abandon us completely. So much has already been said about the Adelaide Diggings that one is quite inexact and I would like to know something about it. I am well and wish with all my heart that you are the same, my dear Hannchen. If I have

only a little luck, I will soon come home so that I can enjoy life united with you and if I am not constrained by necessity, I do not want to go to any more diggings in Melbourne. My tent colleagues are also hale and hearty and all anticipate eagerly the moment when they find gold.

Today's Sunday meal consists of a piece of cooked mutton meat, with rice soup and bread., still I can assure you, my dear Hannchen, yet once more, that I would like you to share my time very much; yet my thoughts are in vain, nothing can be changed and only in the near future can an alternative be found. Give my warmest greetings to everyone and I wish every individual much good luck. Apart from the very deep holes from 40 to 70 feet deep which it is necessary to sink around Ballarat, the tranquil life is a particular advantage; we hear nothing of accidents and highway robberies and all live in complete safety. Let this be a comfort to you dear Hannchen. But now, wife of my heart, fare well. You will have a second letter in upwards of 8 days, perhaps with golden prospects! God only knows! Once more, beloved Hannchen, greetings and kisses until our speedy reunion

Your faithful husband H. Köppen.

Burmeister greets his wife and is sending her a letter next Sunday.

5th letter.

Eureka Ballarat Diggings
November 28th, 1852

Mrs J. Köppen
Care of Mr. A. Beyer, Grocer
Adelaide

Greatly beloved, dear Hannah,

Although I had promised, dear Hannchen, to send you a letter last Sunday, the circumstances were such that they could not be put aside. In particular, last Sunday we were hoping to be in possession of so very much: our 41 feet deep hole was successfully dug in 7 days and right around was very promising. As a result of which we had great hopes, but fate had decided otherwise. Our complete gain was $\frac{1}{2}$ an ounce and the work done for the Queen. Moreover unsettled weather followed, 3 days of hot wind and then the heaviest rain associated with cold which brought my usual illness, cold, cough and pains in my chest followed, and last Sunday, instead of writing to you about our lucky gold finds I lay ill on my wretched chest. Only on Thursday did I leave the board bed and the sky seemed to have left off raining; yet until today it has been extremely cold.

At present there is little prospect of finding anything here. The good sites are all worked out and the new ones not yet discovered; nevertheless I am not giving up, hopefully with patience and persistence we will yet bring something out.

My dear Hannchen, what troubles me very much is that up till now I have not received the slightest news from you; I do not know how you are, my angel, nor if everything is all right with the house. It is all the more important for me to hear, since up until now I have only given out money and have brought in none. It is also not yet possible to get any news of the Adelaide Diggings although I would far rather be in Adelaide than here. I hope that your health remains really good my dear Hannchen and as I am at present denied by fate the chance to be at home for your confinement, hold on to your faith in God and trust in our mutual love, and all will be well. My remaining here, my dear Hannchen, is worth as much to you as to me, as also to our child; if I leave the diggings now we will have lost £37 apart from what you need in Adelaide, and certainly in Adelaide prospects of a good salary are slight. I have struggled with myself for a long time, as to whether I should go or not, my love for you tells me to hurry, to move away and reason said coldly, that I should stay here and care for you and yours; here is the place to prepare a trouble free life for everyone. Now my wish is to stay here; and yet I still do not know what I am doing tomorrow; also I still have no news from you and so nor do I know what might have happened. So write what you think without concern and I will comply. Give my warmest greetings to sister-in-law Reinhardt and her little daughter, likewise to all other relations, Father and Mother. If Father still wishes to go to the Diggings, I advise that he should not come to Ballarat, the work is very hard and it is no joke to dig holes 30 – 70 feet deep. If I myself had known at the beginning what I now know, I would probably not have gone to Ballarat. In addition the isolation from the whole world is very unpleasant, there is little to hear here and correspondence is very irregular.

There is no social intercourse here, although there are Adelaide Germans here, and my tent companions belong unfortunately to those great minds, which rejoice in good luck, but are unpleasant and provocative by nature in misfortune.

All these circumstances, my dear Hannchen, create no binding chains in the Diggings; I sit here without courage, in the clearer light my fortunate life with you emerges and I look forward with

indescribable longing to the moment when my expenses are covered and I am able to hurry back into your arms. Hopefully there are no more disadvantageous interruptions to enter into our lives, the dwelling is well occupied and the rent is paid in regularly; with that the (debts?); do not accumulate, and there is not such a heavy interest to pay. How is the Branzen woman getting on. Is she now paying or is the rent still mounting?

My address is as before
Mr H. Köppen
Care of G. Wrights Store
Eureka
Ballarat Diggings
Melbourne

Now however keep well my dearly beloved Hannchen; when you receive this letter, I may perhaps have already had some good luck, keep loving me and think how I will never stop loving you

Your
faithful husband,
H. Köppen.

8th. letter

Eureka Ballarat Diggings
19th. Dec. 1852

My most beloved, dear Hannchen!

As I promised I am using the deadly calm of this Sunday which is enhanced by a very pleasant north wind. This week my good angel has favoured me with somewhat better luck, my endeavours yielded 14.1/2 ounces, the first gold I have had weighed here in ounces. I have not only covered my expenses with this find, but also free livelihood for a few more weeks. Small as the find is, yet it is a small help for the new little stranger and my dear Mother in Germany. Oh Hannchen, I can hardly tell you what strange feelings emerge in me the nearer the day is of your confinement, partly because my heart rejoices at the thought of the pleasures of fatherhood and partly because I suffer equally with you the pains of childbirth. May God grant that this day pass successfully and that we united might celebrate then the joy of being together again full of strength and with perfect health. Keep up your courage, my good angel, and God will strengthen you, my thoughts are with you in every free moment and the only respite for me is when, before I fall asleep, I can converse with you undisturbed about all the small things which are to clothe the stranger so neatly and I can enjoy undisturbed with you. It is very hard for me, my dear Hannchen, to be separated from you; all the harder for me, as I as father would want to congratulate you first of all, delighted myself first of all about the little new-comer. Yet Fate has decided otherwise. If I were to come away from the Diggings now, who knows whether I would arrive in Adelaide early enough, the expenses are now covered, the Diggings will become worse each day, consequently one must try to use the present time as well as possible and then bid farewell to the rough life for ever, in order to find in your arms my dear Hannchen in the arms of domestic happiness, outstanding compensation for everything endured. And how richly I find this compensation in you; how happy I am, as I have you. Haven't you become my guiding star, my angel for all time, and it will always be so, how I wish for a reasonable strike here quickly in this moment so that I might be able to come to you as soon as possible. Unfortunately as a weak man, one must leave all these hopes, all these wishes to fate, unfortunately one is so often disappointed in one's expectations, but love, intense love, is no empty delusion, even less is it modest to feel intense love, but one feels a happiness in oneself which I am too weak to describe.

And so, beloved, dear Hannchen, for the sake of our love and out of love for the little new-comer be brave and constant, all will go better than we thought.

Reinhardt has gone to the Open Diggings, but has turned back again and should now be in Melbourne and working there. This is all that I have been able to find out about him. Give my warmest greetings to Father, Mother, Brother-in-law and Sister-in-law, but especially to Jettchen and her little Anna. I'm well and I wish you the same from the heart. I also repeat to you once more most heartfelt good wishes for your birthday and the New Year.

My address is as before; if it is possible however, dear Hannchen, please write back to me as soon as possible, each letter from you is a red-letter day for me.

But for now, my dear Hannchen, take care of yourself, think of me with love and until we meet again accept a thousand greetings and kisses from

Your faithful husband,

H. Köppen

9th letter

Eureka Ballarat Diggings
December 26th. 1852

Most dearly beloved, good Hannchen,

Time may still possess the strength to heal old wounds and soften the pains of separation yet I have up until now overlooked this soothing balm, and instead of becoming calm about our separation, I am driven to think of you continually, my dear Hannchen. You are my first and my last thought and no peaceful sleep at night refreshes my tired limbs; dreams, sometimes happy but mostly alarming, occupy my imagination and allow me little strengthening relief. This is a sympathy of kindred souls, nor is it so only for me but also for you too my good angel, as I learned from your last letter dated 2nd. December. This day again was a day of celebration for me, it brought to me a letter from the only object on earth who is dear to me and whom I love, from you my dear wife; I was able to hear quite clearly again the words of your heart and experience and share joy and anxiety with you. It is easily explicable that you experienced such great fear of the fire, and I was very happy then to hear later that God had fortunately allowed the danger to pass by. The present bad situation of the diggings in this place but even more the never ending pressure to be reunited with you again very soon have brought me to the following decision. Within 4 or 5 days up to New Year it will be decided if a newly begun mountain diggings, where even I have marked several holes, is promising. If so I will remain here for the summer in order to make a few pounds weight; but in the opposite case I will leave the Diggings at New Year and come back to you at the first opportunity, which up to now seems to be the most likely case. Therefore, my dear Hannchen, don't write an answer to this letter, as it may not find me, but first wait for my other message which I will deliver to you, either by letter or by word of mouth.

When this letter reaches you, my good angel, the decisive moment, the birth of our child will be over and joy, endless joy awaits me. I would gladly give up 3 ½ years of my life, my dear Hannchen, to relieve you of the pain, but that is the way of the world, the pain and the joy of the birth of a child is imposed only on the woman and we cannot struggle against nature. Endure the birth of our child with steadfastness, my dear Hannchen. God will give you the strength for it and will have heard my ardent prayer; be calm and do not worry about me, I'm in good health and intend to be watchful and quite prudent in the face of danger in the night, I know very well that more important duties oblige me to remain alive. Give my warmest greetings to Father and Mother, as well as to all brothers and sisters, as well as Jettchen and little Anna. Reinhardt is said to be working in Melbourne. Now however, take care of yourself, think of me with love as I will never stop being your

ever loving husband
H. Köppen.

Small packet enclosed.
?1854

Hahndorf. Thursday 28th

Madame Köppen
C/o Mr Heuzenroder
Chemist Shop, Rundle

Street.

To Adelaide

Deeply loved, dear Hannchen,

Three days away from home and my love for you and little Anna urges me to let you have news of me. I arrived safely at Letzen's home in Woodside on the first day towards evening although my Arab was very unwilling to carry me there

(Letter damaged, lower ½ of Page 1 torn off.)

..... The bird must be cooked for 3 to 4 hours in rice or noodle broth then taken out and quickly roast with butter and Dr. Landvogt tells me that this would be an excellent dish. I wish you, dear Hannchen, a really good meal, with the plea to remember me too at the same time. I am quite well, except for a slight cough and cold and so far I am in quite a good mood and in good spirits

(Letter damaged, lower ½ of Page 2 torn off.)

... most beautiful weather favouring my journey up to now and it is a pleasure for me to get to know now the regions of our state. Now take care, my dear Hannchen, a thousand kisses and greetings from me to you and our dear Anna from

Your

deeply loving husband
H. Köppen.

Auburn, February 22nd. 1865

My beloved Hannchen,

Yesterday I collected your dear letter from the post. I have received all the things and I have already had my Boco twice. You believe that I had nothing to do, that the work is taking a long time, but the people have worked continually and in the last 8 days they were by the quarry breaking stones for the corners of the Court Room and to some extent hewing them with 4 corners. We still have very hot days here but by 4 o'clock a cool wind arrives which continues through the night. When the sun begins to set I go up a rather steep hill and have a full view over Auburn and the hills close by. Auburn lies partially on the slope of a mountain, has beautiful, good houses and the hills round about the township look magnificent. It is one of the most beautiful places which I have seen. When the (public Holiday?) takes place next month, Mr Brenchmore has to come to Adelaide. I think that I will have the opportunity then to spend 2 or 3 days together with my beloved Hannchen and the children. I am already very much looking forward to be with you then.

My beloved Hannchen, you write to me that I should send you Anna's address. In the letter which I sent to you were three letters, one to you Hannchen the other to Anna and Anna's letter I put into the letter for Anna, and the letter must be in Adelaide. I am quite hale and hearty, the food is good and the nights are fresh and cool so that one can sleep well. Last Sunday we were in church with Jacka and his brother-in-law. Then we drove in a comfortable Janker carriage to his farm, he is getting on very well, he has 4 strong horses and a pony. Jacka has everything a farmer needs, rich soil and this year he has had 30 bushels per acre. We had an excellent dinner of chicken and a piece of beautiful tender meat with potatoes, then came a lovely apple pie and finally small tarts with delicious jam. At 4.30 the carriage returned to Auburn. Mrs Jacka came with us in the carriage in order to go to the evening service.

Greetings to all my children, Wend, Bungert and Louise Laurenty and the Moodys. I hope that Mr Moody is better again. When I come to Adelaide, we will eat Gr?tze (groats cooked with red fruit juice). That is all I can write for now my beloved Hännchen and I remain your

loving Herrmann

My address is
Mr H. Köppen
Works Superintendant
Auburn.

Auburn 25th February,

1865

My beloved Hännchen,

By this time you will have already received the last letter I wrote to you. Enclosed in the letter which I wrote to Anna is the letter from Anna. I wrote to you that I would come to Adelaide in March but Brenchmore gets his delivery sent to Auburn. There is however a Müller here who often comes to the city and he always takes a man for company. Bleechmore will tell him when I am coming so that he can take me with him. I was very pleased with the photograph of Schröder Clara, Polly and Henry. It is very true to life, and Schröder really looks like Schröder. The photograph was taken by the photographer who is at Halls. I thought that the Valentines were good too. For you my beloved Hännchen I have chosen reflecting my own feelings "True Love". A day before I too received a beautiful Valentine, with the signature A.Kiessing, I think Anna sent that one. We have had some hot days here, but at 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon we get a cooler wind. Then I go to the Police Station which is on the hill. I remain there for two hours and take in the fresh air. After the evening meal I do the same. Anna and Louise have quite forgotten their dear Father. I am quite hale and hearty and if I have no other opportunity I will come in the middle of April to spend three days with you my beloved Hännchen then we will be really happy. After such a long absence I am looking forward so much my beloved Hännchen to love you once more. That is all that I have to share with you, greet all my beloved children, Laurentes, Bungert, Wend, Moodys.

I remain
Your deeply loving
Hermann

If it would give you pleasure to go to Tanunda, I have no objection. I will write to you if I am able to travel with Müller.

Your Hermann

Auburn. March 1st

1865

My beloved Anna,

I was delighted to have your letter and to know that you are hale and hearty. If the ink is so bad, then you must buy ink which writes better. I am already looking forward to being with you in six weeks. We are still now having beautiful days again and fresh air. I wish that the sea was as near to Auburn as it is to Adelaide. Are you also making good progress in school and in music? When I come home, I hope that you will play me some beautiful pieces of music. That is all I can write to you, and I remain your loving

Papa

My beloved little Clare,

I must write to you too. Are you studying diligently in school and can you already read well? Wasn't it beautiful bathing in the sea, I wished that I had a bathing place here. But now take care my good little Clare and retain your agreeable nature.

Your loving Papa.

My best son Hermann,

Papa will also write a letter to you. Are you too studying well in school, and bringing joy to your good Mamma. I am looking forward to when I can go walking with you in our garden. Remember that your Father, so far away, still loves his Hermann.

Auburn, March 15th 1865

My beloved Hannchen,

I received your letter yesterday. With regard to the pair of velvet trousers, have 2 pairs made. One pair of trousers is in good condition and the other which I will bring with me needs a new belt and in another place must also have something inserted. Hannchen, from today there are still 7 days before I can put my arms round you. With the next post send me my small travel things and the box in which the old ones are to be found. Look to see if there is a piece of Indian Jack in it. Pack in two parcels in calico and paper. Last Sunday was at Mr Neumann's, a fellow countryman of mine. He lives 4 miles from here and the day consisted of a beautiful walk of 8 miles which was very good for me as I have very little exercise here. Next Sunday I am going to Neumann's again. Sunday evening I am going to the concert which Mrs Carandine announced yesterday. The large schoolroom will certainly be very full. My health is as usual.

Give my best wishes to the children and all relations and friends and Wend.
The nearer the time comes, so my longing is even greater. Now however I must close and I remain
your

Deeply loving
Hermann