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11th July – Sunday.¹ I ought to be very much ashamed of myself for not having written in this book for so long a time: it is not because I have nothing to put in it, because I really *have* very much matter! But I am away from home, and positively cannot get any time to myself. I have no table for writing in my room, and as to bringing out one’s writing in this Colony, it is absurd! As soon as you are seen with pen, ink, and paper – that is the signal for people to talk to you! It seems to me so thoroughly *unthoughtful*, to say the least of it, that I cannot understand it.

July
1858

Whilst at Murndal the only time in which I could write my English letters, was when M^{rs} Cook left home; for her tongue is perpetual motion.² I used to manage to get some letters written, but not as many as I should.

Note: ‘q.v.’ and ‘qq.v.’ refer to the Biographical Notes, there are some cross-references to other footnotes, but the Index should otherwise be consulted for further information about people mentioned in the notes or reading text. See Maps for location of places named (contemporary spellings are used in notes and maps), and Note on Equivalences for imperial measures, distances and money. ‘VDL’ is Van Diemen’s Land, and standard abbreviations are used for ‘born’, ‘married’, ‘died’ (b., m., d.), points of the compass, some Australian states and New Zealand (NZ).

¹ This section of the Journal begins on p. 119 of Notebook 25. Annie Baxter Dawbin (hereafter, ABD) was writing at the Portland home of William Learmonth (q.v.) and family, where she had been staying since late April. Her husband Robert Dawbin (hereafter, RD), having sold their first station, Bongmire (see Introduction, p. xxxviii), was in the market for a new property.

² While RD was completing the hand-over of Bongmire to the new owner, ABD had been a guest for several days at the neighbouring station of Murndal where Arbella Cooke kept house for her brother, Samuel Pratt Winter (q.v.). (Her husband, Cecil Pybus Cooke remained at the Cookes’ station, Lake Condah.) Arbella (1821–92), born in Co. Meath