

This letter from Hawes was written to a Presentation Sister in August 1919.

It is quoted in *Between Devotion and Design* by John J Taylor.

*Dear Mother Brigid,*

*... Sunday I saddled my horse before daybreak so as to arrive for a Mass at Pindar at 8.30; found inhabitants all prostrate with the flu'-a half-caste 'Brindie' Merritt had shot himself dead at midnight in his camp just outside Hotel-had been delirious with the sickness. I rang up Mullewa to communicate with police but without avail and so had to constitute myself coroner and decided, for the health of those in Pindar; to bury him at once. A soldier lad and myself shouldered pick and shovel and between us dug the grave-then came back, rolled the corpse up in blankets lifted it into a cart, and then having set fire to the dead mans camp and belongings, went out to the grave-followed by the poor 'gin' as mourner. I didn't read the Burial Service but just said some prayers in English. After dinner I baptized the two fatherless babies. Their mother is coming down to Mrs Merritts later on.*

*I started at 4 o'clock to ride home, to get back in time for Benediction at Mullewa-but crossing a wide swamp picked up a side track instead of the road on the farther side. After some miles I found I was on wrong track and going too much north of west-and got into a big dense forest of gum trees. The road got more or less lost in the bed of a creek so I left it and turned south through the bush to head for the main road. Plenty of prickly bushes and huge spiders webs and no path! Fortunately I found my way out just before dark and saw the green fields of a farm ahead-which turned out to be Palethorpes-where I had a cup of tea and then got back to the main road-and back pretty late. Heard then Jimmy Loughlan was very bad so took the holy oil and went down the town to Mrs Thomass but Jimmy was much better. So what with the stiffness in the back where Dr. Hungerford stuck me on Friday and digging the grave and riding about 45 miles I was fairly ready for bed!*

*Yesterday I visited the patients in the town in the morning and out to Camerons and Merritts and the others in the afternoon. I did a bit of galloping to and fro carrying loaves of bread up to old Maggie and Judy and back to Mrs Arnolds to get bottle of milk for the Merritt grand-baby-and then Topsy was taken bad and I went back to the town to Molsters to get them some queer-named stuff for poulticing- 'anti-farmer-bustin' or some such name! Poor Mrs Merritt very much cut up death of son and 3 nephews ...*