

Postmarked: 'JAN / D 7 M / 1822'; 'HOWE STREET / PENNY POST PAID; redirected at 'STRABANE / 100'. Price: uncertain. Seal: Red indecipherable. Addressed to: 'Captain Robertson / 88th Regiment / Lifford near Strabane [deleted and replaced by] Omagh / Ireland'. Annotations: 'Nephew James 5th Jany 1822' in D.R.'s hand.

Ednr 5th January 1822 My Dear Uncle

, I was duly favored with yours of 5th Decembr & never felt more happy upon the receipt of any Letter. The day you sailed from Glasgow it blew a perfect hurricane here which continued almost without intermission for a week -- you had not written for a considerable time after you might have landed & the accounts from Ireland were alarming -- this excited great anxiety in the minds of your friends here, but your Letter came in good time to make me certain as to your safety.

I had a letter from my brother¹ a few days ago; he says all friends in Athole are well. The bad weather set in very early and has continued with but little interuption; this of course will create a severity of provender. The price of cattle, sheep and Barley are much the same as they were when you left the country.

Mr Duncan Stewart & family² are quite well - Mrs Stewart appears to me to be in as good health as ever I saw her - but she herself says she is not. Eliza is likewise to all appearances in proper health but her Father and mother declare she is very far from well. Mrs Ramsay alias Mary McNicoll is in the family way; John expects to hear some news in a short time 3. Mrs McLaren and family are in the usual way she had a Letter from one of her sons in India lately who expresses some surprise at not hearing from you. I understand our gracious meek spirited parson and his lady 4 are coming to Edinr sometime this Winter for the purpose of seeing Mr Wight who had been unwell, but who I now see going about as formerly they will take St Andrews on their way. Colonel Macdonald Dalchosnie 5 is in Town just now. J. M. Stewart Foss 6 is in the country spending the Holydays & he may remain there for all the good he does here he still lives at Pender's house 7. There was a report circulated here sometime ago that Col. Dick 8 of the 42d had been murdered in Ireland, but it was immediately contradicted.

The Christmas Holydays are over with us without there being the least disposition to riot. I question if there is such an orderly set within the Kingdom as we, the Citizens of the "good Town" are we hold all kind of tumults in the greatest detestation and the Irish are on that account peculiarly obnoxious to people of such sober habits It may do well for you military folk to laugh at the clamour risen about the "disturbances in Ireland" as the News papers call them, but we Civilians think it is not a joking matter to be exposed to the fury of a licentious & lawless mob, and accordingly we are heartily frightened The atrocity of the Irish riots however may prove an antidote against radicalism, for the people look with horror on the consequences of setting the constituted authorities at defiance.

I ordered the Chronicle to be sent you there was only one paper remaining of those between the 30th Novr & 11 Decr the day on which I received your Letter & as it was not that immediately preceding the paper of the 11 I gave no order to send it The Chronicle is certainly the best weekly paper unless the Glasgow Sentinel may be put in competition with it the last is a continuation of the Beacon it started immediately upon the other being given up & no person here entertains a doubt but that the Beacon has only changed its name & its publisher It is now much better conducted than formerly, but, as you may learn from the Chronicle, there has already been an action for defamation raised against it by the redoubted champion James Stewart of Dunearn W.S. You will find in your own paper an account of the proceedings in it and in the actions against the Supporters of the Beacon I believe but that is under the rose 9 that McNeill conducts the Chronicle perhaps now, his attention being so much taken up with his official duties, he is not actually the Editor, but he takes an active concern in it generally revises the leading article and advises the publisher upon difficult occasions You will observe that Duncan Stevenson is the publisher, and he being a Highlander more of the highland news are inserted in the paper than in any other.

Colonel Stewart Garth's Book 10 is to be published some of these days I saw him a few days ago he was confined with the wounds in his arm for some time but is now again recovered I am the organ of

¹ The contents of this letter suggest that John Robertson, JR's eldest brother, wrote it.

² Duncan Stewart was almost certainly a lawyer in whose office JR worked when he first came to Edinburgh and almost certainly a kinsman of JR's maternal grandmother Jean, daughter of William Stewart, tacksman of the Miln of Blair Athole, who married in 1776 James Robertson of Kindrochet and died in 181

communication between him & Mr Young 11 at present they are both zealous Antiquaries & of course antiquities form the subject of their communications & altho I am rather fond of the study I now wish with all my heart these "Dry-as-dust" discussions were at an end By the bye when you write me again do not address to me at Mr Young's, but at John Young's Esquire W.S. 19 Castle Street there are few men with sufficient philosophy to enable them to view themselves with unconcern removed a step lower in the grade of society, and I am sorry to say Mr Young is not one of the number had you said Sir John the misnomer might be excused but Mr John will never do.

The new novel by Sir Walter Scott called the Pirate 12 was published about a fortnight ago It is a great favorite here I supposed it has reached Lifford by this time Sir Walter is made a Baron of Exchequer & Hamilton Sheriff of Lanark comes in room of Sir Walter as Principal Clerk of Session I have not heard who is to succeed Hamilton it is the most lucrative Sheriffship next to Edinr Glasgow being within the Shire.

I will attend the debate concerning our 'auld' Kirk 13 when it comes on & report the issue to you

Donald Robertson 14 of the 88th is here to day he is newly returned from Canada where he saw no prospect of success in his farming concerns. I have not seen him I hear that he has a Letter for you from your brother 15.

I hope Mrs Robertson & young Cousin 16 keep stout I am glad you are so far removed from the disturbed districts tho there must be but little society in such a place as Lifford. Mrs R's mind will be easy when there is no actual danger that threatens I will be most happy to hear from you from time to time, particularly in the event of your being removed to different quarters.

With kindest love to Mrs Robertson I am My Dear Uncle Your most affectionate nephew James Robertson

Postmarked: 'APR / W 30 ? / 1822' and illegible name of street. Price: illegible. Seal: Red wax; Robertson crest and motto with initials JR. Addressed to: 'Captain Robertson / 88th Regiment / Omagh / Ireland'. Annotations: 'Nephew James / 1st May 1822 / Answered 20th May' 1. Edinburgh 1 May 1822 My dear Uncle, In my last I informed you that the Duke of Athole was ordered to give in a Condescendence of the facts he offered to prove, by the 8th ult.; and that Mr J S Robertson promised to send you a copy of it under cover of a Frank. The Agent for the Duke, as usual, has not complied with the Ordinary's order, and there can be nothing done to force in the Condescendence until the Court sits, at which time Mr Robertson says he will without delay adopt the proper measures for compelling your opponents to obey the order 2.

I was much concerned to hear from several people here that little Soffy had been unwell. May I beg that you will take the trouble of writing me with your earliest conveniency if she is now perfectly recovered, and what was the nature of the complaint 3.

Poor Jane Robertson Auchleeks died here on the 7th ult and her remains were interred in the West church yard on the 13th. The Doctor her uncle to the last declined interfering; but the two young brothers came over and attended the Funeral. Your friend Dr Stewart, Colonel Donald Dalchosnie and that old woman Major Owen McGregor were there among several others, all to the number of eighteen 4.

Major Owen introduced me the other day to a Captain Robertson Mont Pellier Cottage here, who speaks with a Badenoch accent, and seems to know all the Athole people, particularly the Robertsons. He has asked me to his house but I have not been there yet, so cannot say whether he is a batchelor or married man. I have no idea who this may be 5.

Captain Stewart Crossmount left Town for the Highlands a few days ago. His wife and her precious aunt are still here. He himself has been lately in London seeing his nephew blank Menzies embarking for India 6.

The Revd John Stewart of Blair Athole and Dr Irvine are members of the General Assembly this year. It cannot be but that these gentlemen will reflect credit upon the Dunkeld Presbytery; they are indeed a constellation of talent, formed say of the Great Bear and the Dog Star. I hope however that Andrew Thomson will not take it into his wicked head to divert the assembly at the expense of his good friend Dr Irvine 7. Mr Ramsay of Alyth is likewise a member; Mrs Ramsay will not accompany him to Edinburgh 8. I have not heard of any important or interesting subject for discussion in the Assembly this year, but Andrew Thomson must have something to render himself conspicuous.

I saw Niel Stewart Perth last night. He has lately been at Kindrochit and Derculich and in both places they were in good health and spirits. Mr and Mrs Stewart Derculich are to make a visit at Seggieden in a short time. Niel says that the Rents of this season were paid at Blair by the Duke's Tenants almost to the last Farthing! He himself however was very unsuccessful in collecting debts among them at about the same time and my brother writes me that the state of the Tenantry throughout the whole country is at the lowest ebb. Dr Stewart paper torn i.e. Dr Ostler has taken McNab's Farm at Rinrorie; his Father is to live with him there **9**.

The unfortunate Duel between Sir Alexander Boswell and Stuart and its results and causes has created an incredible ferment in the public mind through all Scotland; but the subject is become so threadbare that I will spare you any remarks on it **10**.

I am sorry that the Almanack has not been sent you. Major Nicoll left Town without informing me. I wish you could point out to me some other method by which I might forward it to you **11**.

You must excuse the desultory gossip of this Letter for I am really in haste. I see too that I have written upon mourning paper, but to save appearances, or rather to make them consistent, I will scrape off that part which is seen. May I expect to hear from you soon. With kindest regards to Mrs Robertson. I always am your affectionate nephew James Robertson

Postscripts

Mr D Stewart and family are going to Avon bank next month **12**.

Mr J S Robertson desires his best respects to you.

I am happy to say that Strowan is almost recovered - that by the excellent method in which his complaint has been treated it is no longer dropsical - and that Betty Hood is taken away from him.

Dr Robertson Alexandria who has been seeing him says that his complaint chiefly arose from improper diet **13**.

J.R.

Notes.

1 The Post Office forgot to change its dating stamp from Tuesday 30 April to Wednesday 1 May.

2 We do not yet know the nature of the dispute between Kindrochit and the Duke of Atholl. In Scots law a Condescence is an articulate statement annexed to a summons, setting forth the allegations in fact upon which an action is founded. A 'frank' was the signature of a person who had the right thereby to ensure the free carriage and delivery of a letter. J S Robertson seems to have been one of JR's colleagues or fellow clerks in Duncan Stewart's offices in Edinburgh. He sends greetings to Duncan Robertson, as mentioned in a footnote to this letter.

3 Sophia Stewart Robertson and her 18 month old daughter Sophy were at this time in Ireland with her husband. I guess that the spelling 'Soffy' might be because she was then, when still a baby, known and addressed by the name Sophy pronounced that way.

4 'Jane Robertson Auchleeks' was probably a daughter, or possibly a sister, of Duncan Robertson of Auchleeks, who in 1821 sold Auchleeks to his cousin Robert Robertson 1777-1850; the new laird of Auchleeks had no daughter named Jane and in any case did not marry until 1816, when the eldest of his children was born. In a letter to her husband Duncan Robertson of Kindrochit dated 3 September 1821 Sophia writes of the Sale of Auchleeks being due on the 19th of that month. The Doctor referred to as Jane Robertson's uncle was possibly the 'Cripple Doctor' Robertson mentioned in Sophia's same 1821 letter. One can only guess at why he persisted in refusing to interfere in her case. The fact that Jane had two young brothers suggests that she was not old herself. Of the other mourners mentioned, 'your friend Dr Stewart' was very probably Dr John Stewart of Findynate; 'Colonel Donald Dalchosnie' was very probably the 5th son of John Macdonald of Dalchosnie 1721-1809 and uncle of John later General Sir John Macdonald of Dalchosnie and Dunalastair 1788-1866, one of the witnesses to Duncan Robertson of Kindrochit's 1816 marriage contract. Colonel Donald Macdonald is described as 'a very distinguished

officer' who 'commanded the 92nd Highlanders at Waterloo' BLG. Major Owen McGregor's identity is not known.

5 We know no more than JR did who Captain Robertson was. 'Mont Pellier Cottage' may have been on the site of the present day Montpelier, Montpelier Park and Montpelier Terrace, three streets to the north of Bruntisfield Place in what was then the Edinburgh suburb of Merchiston. It is surely of some interest that an officer and gentleman who knew 'all the Athole people, particularly the Robertsons' should speak with an immediately recognizable Badenoch accent.

6 Captain James Stewart inherited the Crossmount estate when his father died suddenly in Perth, and intestate, in March 1812. James Stewart had been slightly wounded at the Battle of Barrosa in March 1811 and was probably still abroad in the army when his father died. His sister Mrs Menzies, who lived in Perth, had at least two sons information from letters of Sophia Stewart to Duncan Robertson. The identities of James Stewart of Crossmount's wife and her aunt are not known.

7 The Revd John Stewart was Minister of Blair Athole until his death in 1842. The Revd Dr Alexander Irvine 1773-1824 had been Minister of Little Dunkeld since 1806. In describing their talents, JR's metaphorical reference to the stars may have involved a description of their physical appearances, their characters or their intellects, or perhaps a combination of all three. It is a good example of JR's style and wit which was already well developed at the age of 23 and matured into the latent descriptive powers which twenty and more years later are such an important and characteristic feature of at least some entries in his private Tobermory and Kirkwall diaries. Andrew Mitchell Thomson 1779-1831, Scottish divine, of Edinburgh University; minister of St George's, Edinburgh, 1814; leader of the evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, and reformer; attacked the British and Foreign Bible Society for binding up the Apocrypha with the Bible, 1827; published religious works DNB. It would be interesting to know what aspect of 'his good friend Dr Irvine' he was likely to use 'to divert the assembly'.

8 Mrs Ramsay was possibly a daughter of John McNicoll of Craig, near Alyth, a prosperous Edinburgh accountant who acted as a witness to the Deed of Settlement made by Duncan Robertson of Kindrochet in 1824. Sophy Robertson spent a holiday at Craig in 1839 because their daughter Tina was one of her closest friends.

9 Niel Stewart was possibly a Shierglass connexion; this might explain why he visited Kindrochit and Derculich, where in both instances the Lady of the house was a Stewart of Shierglass. His father may have been Peter Stewart. What he was doing collecting debts in Athole is not clear. He was a sick man, as indicated by the following passages from two of Sophia Stewart Robertson's letters. Writing on 13 June 1823 she reports that 'Niel Stewart Perth' had recently returned from Madeira and was said by his father to be "rather better than when he left home but still very weak". In a later letter dated 21 August in the same year she writes: "We were grieved to hear from Peter Stewart last week that poor Niel was getting worse, his mother went to Drumachary with him but he got worse there and was obliged to return almost immediately, poor Peter seems to have lost all hope". Later she indicates that she might be spending a few days in Perth staying at Peter Stewart's house. The brother to whom JR refers as reporting on the state of the tenantry was most probably his elder brother John, then still at home with their father and mother at Milton of Invervack, and hence generally known in these years as 'John Milton'. Nothing is yet known about Dr Stewart or of McNab's Farm.

10 Sir Alexander Boswell, antiquary and poet, born in 1775 as eldest son of James Boswell the biographer of Johnson, died from the effects of a duel with James Stuart of Dunearn, whom he had attacked in the pages of the 'Glasgow Sentinel'. As JR reports, this sensational case was the wonder of the year in 1822.

11 'Major Nicoll' may have been Major Robert Nickle of the 88th Regiment; his wife was a daughter of William Dallas W.S. of Edinburgh. Major Nickle later became Major-General Sir Robert Nickle and died at Melbourne in 1855, where he was commander of the Australian forces.

12 Duncan Stewart, writer and head of the firm for which JR worked, was a cousin of the Kindrochit Robertsons. Avonbank, presumably their country home, has not been identified.

13 Strowan was Colonel Alexander Robertson of Struan who died unmarried in 1822. Betty Hood sounds like a mistress or nurse. Dr Robertson Alexandria has not been identified; on 3 November 1839 Sophy Robertson reports in a letter to her mother Sophia Stewart Robertson that a 'Mrs Robertson Alexandria is negotiating at Dalchalloch', presumably in order to buy it.

Postmarked: 'AUG/T 27 M/1823'. Price: '2/2'. Seal: Black wax rectangle 18mm high and 15mm wide with curved corners enclosing the Robertson crest of a right hand sitting on a cushion and holding a regal crown, with the motto "Virtutis Gloria Merces" curved round above the crest and the initials "JR" below it. Addressed to: 'Capt Robertson / 88th Regt / Claremorris / County of Mayo / Ireland'. Annotations: 'Nephew James 26th August 1823' and 'Received 2nd September 1823'. Edinburgh 26th August 1823 My Dear Uncle, Dr Stewart's letter **1** of yesterday's date would prepare you for the melancholy event that I have now to communicate. Your Father **2** is no more; he breathed his last about 4 o'clock yesterday morning. I had a letter from my brother **3** to day of yesterday's date; he says the funeral is proposed to be on Saturday. Mrs Robertson and Soffy sic **4** are going off to morrow at 6 o'clock in the morning accompanied by Miss McLaren who goes to Eastertyre **5**. They are both in good health. Mrs R wishes me to say that, as you cannot be at home before the funeral, nor indeed till every thing is settled, you had better not come over until you get your affairs put in proper order, particularly if you will be obliged to go back again to Ireland to do so. Forgive me my Dear Uncle if I also advise you to remain. I know how anxious your poor sisters will be to see you and how anxious you will feel to come home; still the immense trouble and expense of travelling so far to no purpose almost but to see them is a great sacrifice, and when you intend too to be home in the latter end of next month. Mrs R herself will write you whenever she arrives at Kindrochit **6**. I am extremely sorry that I cannot accompany her home this being the week previous to the Box day and the busiest with us in all the year **7**. On Thursday the 4th proximo I was to have left town at any rate, but I will use my utmost endeavours to go by the night mail of Friday first and be at Kindrochit on Saturday forenoon. I do not recollect of any thing further I have to say and as I am in haste I must conclude. I ever am My Dear Uncle, Yours most affectionately, James Robertson
P.S. Duncan Stewart is at Avonbank **8**. Derculich and Mrs Stewart **9** left here last Wednesday. John Stewart Garth is at home **10**. I suppose both he and the Colonel **11** will attend the funeral.

Notes.

- 1** Dr Stewart was presumably Dr John Stewart of Findynate, a nephew and possibly a medical attendant of the deceased James Robertson of Kindrochit.
- 2** James Robertson of Kindrochit was also, of course, the grandfather of James Robertson, the writer of this letter, whose mother Margaret Robertson was a sister of Duncan Robertson the addressee.
- 3** The use of the terminology 'my brother' without giving a name must mean that this was John Robertson, often referred to as 'John Milton'; he was the elder brother of James Robertson the writer of this letter, and was probably still at home on the farm at Invervack with his parents; he later occupied a farm at Banchor, near Newtonmore, and was then generally known as 'John Banchor'.
- 4** Before marrying Duncan Robertson, Kindrochit, Mrs Robertson was Sophia Stewart, Shierglass; at the time of her father-in-law's death she and Sophy were on holiday at Porto Bello with her sister Jean Stewart and the latter's husband Alexander Stewart of Derculich. She had asked James Robertson to write to her husband, as reported by her in a letter to him from Kindrochit dated 1 September 1823: "I was so hurried at leaving Porto Bello I had not time to write you but begged your nephew James to do it - I was afraid you might think of hurrying home before your business with the Regiment was finally arranged, and perhaps be obliged to go away again, which I could not bear to think of particularly at this late Season of the year". The spelling of young Sophie's name as 'Soffy' may reproduce the joking pronunciation then used; it seems most unlikely to have been an error on James's part.
- 5** Miss McLaren was presumably a member of the family to which Sophia Robertson refers with slight irritation in her letter from Porto Bello to her husband Duncan dated 30 July 1823: "the McLarens are here and have introduced several of their acquaintances, so that we never have an hour to ourselves". Eastertyre is in Strathtay, about a mile west of Logierait.

- 6** See Note 4 above in which there is a quotation from this letter she wrote from Kindrochit.
- 7** 'Box day' was one of the Court of Session vacation days when papers ordered to be deposited in court must be lodged.
- 8** Duncan Stewart was a cousin of the Robertsons and seems to have been the head of the firm in Edinburgh in which young James Robertson was then working.
- 9** 'Derculich and Mrs Stewart', as mentioned in Note 4 above, were Mrs Robertson's elder sister Jean and her husband the Laird of Derculich, which is in Strathtay.
- 10** John Stewart Garth was the youngest son of Robert Stewart of Garth, who died in 1820. At this time John Stewart was based in the West Indies, in managing the Stewart of Garth sugar estates on Trinidad. He had a number of illegitimate black children, one of whom probably Ann Stewart, then aged 11 he had brought to Scotland with him, as reported by Sophia Robertson in a letter to her husband dated 30 July 1823: "John Stewart Garth has come home in bad health poor Man he has brought one of his Black Pets home to leave with his Sister".
- 11** 'The Colonel' was David Stewart of Garth 1772-1829, who was later promoted to Major-General and died as Governor of St Lucia; he was at this time much in the public eye as author of *Sketches of the Highlands*, published in 1822. In July 1823 he was still in London trying to further his career and repair the doomed fortunes of Garth, crippled by the enormous debts left by his father. It is of some interest that James Robertson "supposed" that they would both attend his grandfather's funeral; it seems that at this time and place men were invited to attend funerals but did not always turn up; the expectation that these two brothers would be invited, and would attend, may give some hint of the relative social standing of the Stewarts of Garth and the Robertsons of Kindrochit. In a letter to her husband Duncan dated Kindrochit 1 September 1823, after the funeral, Sophia Robertson reports that "everything was conducted with the greatest regularity and propriety, every person asked attended, except two or three".

Postmarked: 'MAY R 22 E 1822'. Price: '8'. Seal: Red wax, ovate, showing Robertson crest and motto over initials 'JR'. Addressed to: 'Captain Robertson of Kindrochet Blair Athole'. Annotations: 'Single' and 'Nephew James - 22nd May 1824' in Duncan Robertson of Kindrochet's hand.

Edinr 22d May 1824 My Dear Uncle. I have no apology for so long delaying to write you or even to answer your letter. I thank you for the kind concern you express regarding my success in business, and I shall now give you an account of how matters stand with me.

You seem to have formed a just estimate of Mr Young's character when you advise me not to be too precipitate in making certain proposals to him. He has however been compelled by an unforeseen circumstance to speak more decidedly about his retirement, and of the manner in which he wished to have his affairs conducted than either Mr Baxter or I expected. The circumstance to which I allude is this.

An action has been brought against one of Mr Young's best clients and particular friend calling in question his right to all his Estates which are very considerable. Mr Young, knowing that if he undertook to conduct this case he would get involved in a very intricate and laborious piece of business from which he could not easily extricate himself, hesitated for some time whether he should not give it up to us at once, and signified his intentions generally how his affairs should be arranged and business carried on upon his retirement. Upon further consideration however he thought that he having been agent for his friend and his family for about thirty years must necessarily be in the knowledge of many circumstances of great importance to the case coming on which could not all be communicated as they might only be called to his recollection by the contingent statements of the opposite party in the course of litigation; and also that even although another person could be informed of all such facts yet he could not apply them so appositely as a person of Mr Young's knowledge of his clients affairs in many of which he had borne a principal part, such as putting his name to Cautionary Bonds, lending money - acting for sometime as Managing Trustee upon the Estate &c &c &c Under such circumstances he felt it would be ungenerous to deprive his friend of his assistance at a period so critical and at last resolved upon sacrificing his own ease to his client's necessity. Although the period of Mr Young's retirement has been thus delayed and of course Mr Baxter and I

prevented from putting our scheme into immediate execution, still we have the satisfaction of knowing Mr Young's intentions in regard to us clearly and decidedly.

The Clan Dinner went off this year rather heavily. There were only about 16 or 17 present. I could not attend. You will have heard of an intended Club of the name for the institution of which principally the Clan were called together. There was a Secretary to it appointed with powers to call a meeting or take any other step he might think conducive to promote the object in view. This Secretary is your friend James S. Robertson. George ought to have it; but it was his own opinion that he engrossed too much attention in the affairs of the clan, while James, as I on a former occasion hinted to you, felt perhaps a spice of jealousy. He must now be satisfied or the deuce is in him. He was Croupier at the Dinner (Mr Robertson Scott of Benholm, a highly respectable gentleman, in the chair). 'Secretaryship and all, thou hast it now'. He is a keen clansman & a good fellow notwithstanding, and except George we could not have a better. He has been hitherto so much engaged in business (Whitsunday term) that he has not called a meeting of the Committee, or done any thing else instead except having written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer requesting him to become president of our Society. I have seen the answer couched in most polite terms - but declining on account of nonresidence in Scotland.

The Committee is the same as formerly. There shall be a meeting before you meet in the Country and an account of the proceedings sent by the Secretary to Strowan. It was only Thursday last I learned from James S.R. that he (Strowan) had not been written to after the Dinner. Had I been aware of it sooner I myself should certainly write him. James says he will do so immediately. By the bye Mr McInroy was asked and thought proper not to honor us with his presence we are all in high dudgeon of course. You should not ask him to dine with you at Blair. I shall write you immediately after the first meeting of the Committee. They have already anticipated the funds of the Club by paying away £10.10 for a bagpipe to the piper Alex Robertson from Strathbrane. This in the meantime has come from George.

Duncan Stewart, his family and the rest of your friends here are well. My own health is completely recovered. Will you be so good as inform John if you see him that his box shall be sent by next week's carrier. Are you coming in to Town this Summer? I was disappointed in not seeing you here in April. I shall expect to hear from you after your Dinner. With kindest regards to Mrs Robertson, I remain, My Dear Uncle, Yours affectionately, James Robertson.

I am informed Trinafour has given up his action against Strowan's Trustees.

Postmarked: Circular red 'PAID EDIN E APR 30 1829'. Price: ?14. Seal: Red wax rectangle 18mm high and 15mm wide with curved corners enclosing the Robertson crest of a right hand sitting on a cushion and holding a regal crown, with the motto "Virtutis Gloria Merces" curved round above the crest and the initials "JR" below it. Addressed to: 'Capt. Robertson of Kindrochit Blair Athole' with additional directions 'To be forwarded from Blair' and 'Only double'. Annotations: 'Recd 1 May 1829 Ansd same day', together with a number of scribbled money calculations, all in D R of K's hand.

Edinburgh 22 Cumberland Street 30th April 1829 My dear Uncle. I was duly favored with your letter signifying your willingness to become Cautioner for me in Niven's Sequestration, and I now return you my most sincere thanks for your kindness. I had a letter from Dr Stewart **2** expressing his readiness to join in the Bond of Caution, but upon mentioning my proposed Sureties to the principal Creditors, they said that tho' they were quite satisfied of their respectability yet as they were personally unknown to them they would like to have the name of some Gentleman in Town. Upon this I suggested you and Baxter **3** at the meeting for electing a Trustee and all present declared themselves satisfied.

I now enclose the Bond of Caution already signed by Baxter and myself, and as I am anxious to get myself confirmed in the office of Trustee by the Court immediately, which cannot be done until Caution is presented, I beg you will return it in course of post. You will observe that the amount for which you and Baxter are Cautioned is a definite sum and only £450 - a less sum than I had anticipated. Your cautionary obligation cannot in any way be limited in point of time; it must necessarily continue with the duration of the Trust, or while I remain Trustee. You will have the goodness to subscribe the Deed opposite the pencil Mark X under Mr Baxter's signature on every page and the Marginal Note. The two Witnesses will subscribe under Donald **4** on the last page only. Mention the date of signing and names and designations of the Witnesses.

I carried my election after a keen opposition from a young man of the name of Gordon, an Accountant who was supported by several of the Creditors; he and his friends make a show of disputing my appointment but I am confident that they will not venture to carry their opposition into Court, where I am well advised their objections to my Voters would not for a moment be listened to.

Since my last letter Donald has had a letter from Canadian James 5 in which he says that he does not expect to be in Scotland before the month of September, or August at soonest. He has some intention of paying a second Visit to his Uncle Col. Zulekie 6 on the Rhine as he leaves France, and if he does I should suppose that it will be impossible for him to be in Kindrochit before the end of September. He had letters from home lately and all his friends are well. We wrote him by Badgley .

I saw Sheerglass the other day. He says you are two letters in his debt and will not write you again till he hears from you. He and Miss Stewart are well .

I hope that by the time you write me John will know the result of his offer for Invervack; if he hears you will of course let me know .

I must conclude my letter to be in time for the post. Yours very affectionately. James Robertson

Edinburgh 27th Nov 1830, Torphican St.

My Dear Uncle, I should have answered your letter before now, more particularly as I have several circumstances to communicate regarding Genl Robertson's affairs that will interest you. I regret that the first thing I have to mention is of a private and rather painful nature. I do not know whether the Genl has informed you that his son had been sent to a military College in England (I forget which). He had been there but a very short time when he became disgusted by the strict discipline observed by the scholars and privately left the place. The masters immediately wrote of this to his father and it seems that the old gentleman's visit to England was to recover and if possible to reclaim his son. How he succeeded I do not know. The account I have from my friend George Robertson whose connections are chiefly in Elgin & the neighbourhood. The Genl himself never alluded to the subject in his letters to me & this gives me some hope that the story may be unfounded or at least exaggerated. I have not hinted at it to anyone here & I am sure I need not recommend the same caution to you.

Geo Robertson often told me, before the present escapade, that the boy was spoilt by overindulgence & likewise that he wished the Genl was removed from Elgin on account of the connection with the Jenkinsees which is by no means respectable in that, their native place. The father of the Genl's son-in-law was a Fiddler.

Oliphant has made a proposal through Keay that we should exhibit to him the evidence of Genl R's descent, and if he finds it satisfactory he will allow a Decree of Absolvitor to go out in the Genl's favour. I propose going over the evidence very carefully with our Counsel, and if they think it perfectly ample and sufficient to show it to Keay. The Genl & James Condie both approve of this. Patton has examined the proof and declared himself satisfied with it & I am now arranging it for the inspection of the ex-Solicitor General Mr Hope. I must proceed very cautiously & with the best advice in this matter. Will you take the trouble to order a Certificate from the Session Books of the birth and baptism of all Robby Bane's sons that are entered. Will you likewise send me any papers belonging to or regarding Robby that John Auchanree may have; no matter how unimportant they may appear. I wish to have all.

Postmarked: 'JUL C 16 E 1831' in red over 'HANOVER STREET' in faint black. Price: '8'. Seal: Red wax rectangle 18mm high and 15mm wide with curved corners enclosing the Robertson crest of a right hand sitting on a cushion and holding a regal crown, with the motto "Virtutis Gloria Merces" curved round above the crest and the initials "JR" below it. Addressed to: 'Capt Robertson of Kindrochit Blair Athole'.

Edinburgh 16th July 1831 My dear Uncle, I have yours of the 15th this morning. James came here today at 7 o'clock a.m. He looks and feels much better than I expected he would Coughs but little, and walks about with ease in short he is recovering fast. Dr Allison has been seeing him, & expresses a favourable opinion. He & Donald leave this place on Tuesday morning & will reach Dunkeld that Night.

As they cannot trust to getting seats in the Inverness Coach you will send your Gig to Dunkeld on Tuesday so as to take them up on Wednesday James must not be crowded in the Gig and you will therefore send down a man that can walk home. They will be at Fishers.

James & Donald join me in kind love to you all. I remain My dear Uncle. very affectionately yours

James Robertson

Postmarked: Circular red 'SEP H 2 E 1831'. Price: '8' plus 'Add '. Seal: Remains of red wax. Addressed to: 'Capt Robertson of Kindrochet Blair Athole'. Annotations: 'Recd 4th Sept 1831' in D.R. of K.'s hand. Edinburgh 2d Septem 1831 My dear Uncle,

I was favored by yours by William 1, but did not propose writing you again until I should see you in Athole. I am now however applied to by poor Mrs Duncan Stewart & her son James 2 to request of you that you will speak to your friend Col. Macdonald 3 on James' behalf and ask his interest to procure him a Commission. It seems that Mr Stewart 4 himself had a short time before his death consented to lodge the money, but it had not been done in time.

Mr Keay 5, John MacNicole 6 & the Mother had a serious consultation what was best to be done with James, & they agreed that it should at once be endeavoured to get him in to the Army, & thus remove a heavy burden off the Widow's hands. John MacNicole agreed to advance the Cash until their own funds should be available; & Mrs Keay wrote to Sir George Murray 7 for his interest. It was thought that the more Perthshire Freeholders 8 could be got to back her petition the better, and it is to request that you will procure as many letters from your County friends and more particularly from Col. Macdonald that I now write.

It is of great consequence that these recommendations should be got immediately and forwarded to James who leaves this 9 to morrow for London. His address is Tavistock Hotel, Covent Garden. Will you write with them, & directing James how to proceed in his applications. Perhaps Col. M. & yourself might give him letters to officers or others of influence on the spot. As I consider that in a case like this all Mr Stewart's friends should exert themselves to the utmost I would write Genl. Robertson 10 were it not that he is applying for his own son; but that puts it out of the question. I know however that you will do all you can, & poor Mrs S. looks to you for advice & support.

Most unfortunately Mr Stewart left no settlement & he very shortly before his death invested nearly all the Capital he had in the purchase of the house in George Street. The consequence is that James succeeds to this the sole means left by his father. His mother told me that he was behaving very much to her satisfaction in this matter

I hope to get an indenture from Ewen McNeil for John which will be a considerable saving to the family. The Widow has one half of the profits of the business for seven years, when John will be assumed into the firm, & her half will be then divided between them 11. She herself told me of these arrangements, but in confidence.

I will be north the end of next week. Let Donald 12 prepare himself to relieve me. I saw Sam Fergusson 13 to day who gave me the country news. Last week I dined with Mr & Mrs Bell they have taken a house No 31 Dublin St 14.

I have a letter from your brother 15 dated 27th July. He had just then received James's letter giving the first account of his illness & he & the family were in the utmost anxiety & distress. He wrote merely to say that if James had not left, & that should his medical advisers tell him to go to the South of Europe neither time nor expense should be a consideration, & that ample funds were placed at his disposal with a London Banker, Mr Gould.

They were all well when he wrote. In haste but affectionately yours. James Robertson
[note in pencil on blank fold of this letter, probably but not certainly in Duncan Robertson's handwriting, reads as follows] Mem[orandum] ? for Dalchosnie The name of the Varnish & if laid on the figures only. When ought the Onions to be pulled

Postmarked: 'PITLOCHRY PENNY POST'. Price: uncertain. Seal: Red wax with Robertson arms. Addressed to: 'The Revd A. R. Irvine Foss Manse Pitlochry'. Annotations: none. Edinburgh 11th July 1836 62 Queen Street My dear Irvine

Gordon & Stuart and Mr Muir finished their inspection of the Garth accounts sometime ago; and after consulting among themselves they were immediately to have sent me a note of a few particulars regarding which they require explanation. Though urged by me they have hitherto failed to send this note, on the ground of being much engaged; and I again thought it useless to write you until I should receive it, which I daily expect to do. In the meantime however I think it right not to delay longer of informing you that generally speaking Gordon & Stuart are satisfied, and will allow the interim division to be made immediately - at the same time reserving all objections to the accounts until a final division takes place. I am anxious to have them committed to this, as it would be a virtual accession to the Trust Deed but I am obliged to proceed very cautiously in the matter. They have observed the payments to Dr Stewart's Legatees and call for an explanation. I have talked both to Mr McNeill and Mackenzie on the subject and they are generally of opinion that your mother is safe but more of this after I see Gordon.

I was from home when your letter about Mrs Irvine's Service arrived. There is some difficulty attending a Service cum beneficio to a party dying abroad, when the Inventory is not given in within the annus deliberandi. In the ordinary case it cannot be done, but where the deceased lived and died abroad some license is allowed though the question is not a very clear one. Upon the whole I would like to see you before the Service takes place, and in the meantime you can make out a particular Inventory of your Uncle's Estate of every denomination. I incline to think that Mrs Irvine will incur no real danger by an ordinary General Service.

Our friend Archy McNeill is to be married this day week. He is still to live with his brother. Some five and twenty of his friends are to give him a Supper at Barry's on Friday in honor of the occasion. Professor Wilson in the Chair. Cheape? P Robertson, Neaves? Moir, D McNeill, W Forbes &c &c to be present. I expect an extraordinary treat.

My brother William leaves this place for Milton of Invervack to morrow in great haste. Yours most sincerely James Robertson

Postmarked: 'NOV H 17 E 1836' and 'PITLOCHRY PENNY POST'. Price: '8' and 'Add '. Seal: Red obliterated. Addressed to: 'The Revd A. R. Irvine Foss Manse Pitlochry'. Annotations: none. Edinburgh 17th Nov 1836 62 Queen Street My dear Irvine

I yesterday received your letter of the 15th, and at the same time a letter from Gordon & Stuart refusing to withdraw their objections. I revised the answers and sent them to our opponents, and expect them back immediately when I shall at once lay the Memorial before Counsel. In the meantime I have not yet intimated Mrs Irvine's acquiescence in their new demands.

The Statute 1661 quoted by Gordon allows a preference over the creditors of the heir to those of the ancestor "provided they do diligence against the appearand aire and real Estate of the defunct within three years after the defunct's decease". The act 1621 is directed against "Fraudful alienations by a Bankrupt to confident and conjunct persons". You will see at a glance that these statutes do not support Gordon's objections. They are well known to every lawyer, and my argument assumes that they are so - but on revising the answers I pointed out no more direct terms than in the original case the irrelevancy of all the arguments founded upon them by the objectors.

Of course Mr McNeill gave his real opinion. I asked him yesterday if he did, and he laughed heartily at the idea of its being otherwise than a real bona fide opinion. Yours very truly, James Robertson

I am glad that a Dinner is to be given to Mr Macdiarmid. He deserves every mark of honor as one of the very few useful Gaelic Country Gentlemen now remaining.

Ewen Macneil is arrived in Town, and wonderfully well all things considered.

An opinion is gaining ground that the Whigs will go out about the time of the Meeting of Parliament, or soon after.

No Postmarks, Price, Seal or Annotations. It is clear from remarks in this letter that it was sent by the hand of Archy Campbell and therefore was simply addressed to: 'The Revd A. R. Irvine'. Edinburgh: 10th Oct 1837 66 Great King Street My dear Irvine

I have received yours of the 9th. The three Objections to Mrs Irvine's claim were originally Mr Joseph Gordon's - and Tom Mackenzie and I thought it would be wise and prudent to adopt them verbatim et literatim.

You will remember too that you state them as Trustees for other parties if you were acting for yourselves alone, of course you would not avail yourselves of any plea that appeared inconsistent with your own notions of law and justice but as the guardians of the rights of third parties you are bound to protect those rights by stating every competent objection to claims that may encroach upon them.

Then again the objection in question was suggested by a Creditor against claims in which the Trustees are interested and in this view I am very sure that neither Mr Macdiarmid nor you would for one instant wish to prevent a hearing of it. But after all the plea is only immaterial, not unfair; and the arbiter will look upon it as he would upon the common string of objections urged against every disputed political claim, without distinction of person or circumstances.

Your observations on the plea of prescription urged by the Trustees are just, and clearly expressed. The onus probandi certainly lies with them - and I shall bring out that point more prominently At the same time observe that the Trustees do not call on Mrs Irvine and Mrs McDiarmid to prove that the interest was not paid - they only plead the negative prescription, and call upon the claimants to shew that it has not run. This I think they do pretty satisfactorily - and here the answer might stop - but from a natural anxiety to prove the justice of their demand the Claimants proceed to shew from undoubted evidence that it was impossible the Interest could have been paid. I shall however throw the onus in the teeth of the Trustees but I am mistaken if Mr McNeill does not considerably alter and remodel the case. He rarely sticks to his Memorial a virtue which is shared by hardly any of his professional bretheren.

Mr Macdiarmid desires the General's cash book to be sent to him which I have done You may step over and see it He reserves his observations until he examines the book excepting only that he says special objections might be stated against the claim of Donald Stewart for wages. Now prescription has undoubtedly run, this is argued by the objectors, and what is more this is quite sufficient to cast the Claim. If then you have hanged Mr Donald Stewart, I can see no reason for drawing and quartering him but it is not my province to quarrel with that which brings grist to my own mill, so if the Laird of Bohally has a mind to "slay the slain" I will give him a cost of my office.

Archy Campbell called here on his way to Dumfries, and promised to look in again on his return towards the end of last week. As there is no post your way till Thursday I shall not dispatch my packet to Mr Macdiarmid before that day in case Campbell may come this way yet.

Our friend Archy McNeill is in great distress and dolour. He came over here on Sunday with a most portentous face and his hair standing on end and and cried "I have shocking news". Bless us says I what is the matter - nothing has happened to the Laird? "No - but Buscar is dead" If it had been one of his little nephews or nieces I am sure he would bear the loss with resignation but Buscar! Buscar strangled! "By if Alexander does not dismiss that d--d rascal Doherty " Here he paused ominously, "bent his awful brows and gave the nod" Seriously the thing is very provoking - the dog was tied up by the unlucky Docherty, and struggled so hard to get free that he broke his chain - but he injured his neck so much that he died a day or two thereafter. Bran killed four stags this season almost single handed; and Forbes got a splendid and proved dog in Sutherland, but there never was and there never will be a deer hound to match Buscar.

I do not know when I may go to Atholl Ever. Yours very truly James Robertson A Campbell is arrived I consider it best to send the General's Cash book to you, you can show it to Mr McD. Please to read, wafer and forward my letter to him Will you return the Memorial, with your remarks on the Margin, by D McDiarmid.

Postmarked: 'MAY 5 E 1838' and 'RANNOCH PENNY POST'. Price: '8'. Seal: Remains of red wax seal with initials 'JR'. Addressed to: The Revd A. R. Irvine Manse of Foss Pitlochry'. Annotations: none. Edinburgh 4th May 1838 66 Great King Street My dear Irvine

I was duly favored with your letter of the 26th with the vouchers of debt which accompanied it.

The Sum contained in the vouchers is £100.8.4

You take Credit on your accounts for two Sums

of £5 each paid to Christian Stewart Glasgow £10

Mr Rattray charges as remitted to David for C.S. 10

for freight 22

for Lamont 30

72.0.0

Leaving a balance in your favor for which the credit is taken

of £28.8.4

and which can be added to the balance due you on your account with the Estate. You and your Mother can now settle among yourselves as to how much of this sum is due to each. By the way, a Sum of £10 sent by Mr rattray to David must be deducted. I think David must have paid it to Christian Stewart as part of the £40 he gave her.

Postmarked: 'OCT H 1 A 1838' in red and 'RANNOCH PENNYPOST' in black. Price: '8'. Seal: Mostly destroyed red wax small shield with Robertson arms of three wolves' heads. Addressed to: 'The Revd A. R. Irvine Manse of Foss Pitlochry'. Annotations: a few faint pencilled figures Club Rooms 95 George St Edinburgh 1st Oct 1838 My dear Irvine

I have this moment heard that the Minister of Blair has had another attack. If I can make it out I will attend Lord Glenlyon's dinner on the 5th I made a sort of promise to Condie to that effect but I fear I shall not be able to keep it Do you however make a point of being there, and if possible have a few minutes conversation with Condie on the subject of the Blair Church They have you in view - yet you must not allow them for a moment to forget your claims. Let your brother William write to me when any decisive change takes place in Mr Stewart's health.

I hope you sent copies of all your testimonials to Lord Glenlyon. As soon as it can be done with propriety I will get the originals out of the hands of the Trustees and send them to you, after I have made copies for Condie.

In case of a sudden emergency it might be as well that you had copies lying beside you ready to be enclosed to him on the shortest notice But see him, & endeavour to get a promise from Lord G. through him, or any other person, for I understand that his Lordship considers his word once passed as inviolable and others may wish to get him committed to themselves I do not know whether Mr Butter has much interest with him or whether he might not use it in behalf of Campbell of Moulin But every likely quarter should be tried though Condie is your main chance The only party I am at present afraid of is Campbell, through Lady Glenlyon If I do not go North I shall write Condie

in haste yours most truly James Robertson P.S. I have since writing the above thought it best to write to Condie at once, & I have accordingly despatched a letter

To WILLIAM STEWART IRVINE Pitlochry.

Letter written on 14 by 9 inch sheet of folded paper embossed with a very small circular device bearing the words 'POST OFFICE PAPER' on the rim, surrounding a centre bearing the words 'UNDER 4 OZ'. Edin: 25th Nov: 1840 66 Great King Street

My dear William, I am favoured with yours of yesterday. The Charles Robertson whom you mention was an Athole man was servant to the late Mr McNeill of Barra Got Mrs McNeill's maid Ann Campbell with child was compelled by the Lady to marry the said Anne Campbell, the ceremony having been performed at Barra House by the Revd E MacQueen Minister of the Parish in presence of the Laird & Lady on the 31st Aug[us]t 1795 as witness the marriage certificate now lying before me.

Charles took the first opportunity of flying the Island came to Athole, & being a smart fellow, & the King wanting good soldiers at that particular juncture, he obtained a Commission through the influence of

the late Colonel Butter of Faskally, and served a considerable time in the Regiment commanded by that Gentleman. He eventually attained the rank of Major, & retired on the half pay of the 72d Regt. It strikes me however that that was not the Corps in which he served with Col B.

He married a Lady of respectable connexions in England, notwithstanding of the Barra business and stoutly withstood, denied & defied the rightful claims of Annie Campbell to the day of his death and she, the said Annie, as stoutly maintained & to this day maintains their entire good faith and avail in judgment, & as we Lawyers say, outwith the same. But she was, & still continues poor & friendless, and moreover an inhabitant of the distant regions of Barra, or a residenter at Corran by Fort William, and consequently she could not, & cannot derive any benefit whatever from her legal rights excepting the honorable title of Mrs Robertson, which it is some solace to her to bear.

Now from the foregoing history I infer as follows 1st That Charles did not belong in a family of any note - 2d That he belonged to Moulin or the neighbourhood of Faskally - 3d That you may discover his Regiment by ascertaining that of Col Butter - 4th That had he lived until now he would be upwards of 70 years of age - And 5th that you being, as we must all allow, an intelligent genealogist & so forth, you will be able from these premises to trace out Charles' family & connexions. The late Kindrochet knew Charles & his family both - and my friend Capt Johnny R. knew, or says he knew himself but that last is of little consequence.

In communicating with the English Mrs Robertson, I need not point out to you the prudence of making no allusion whatever to the Scotch Mrs Robertson, whose story I am satisfied that a clever fellow like Charles never mentioned to her Do you think he belonged to the Auchleeks branch?

I entirely concur with you in what you say regarding David's succession. I wrote a long letter to Alexr on the subject the other day, & expect his answer in the course of a few days.

You have already done more than I had anticipated for the Scott Monument and I hope you will still do more, & fairly entitle yourself to have your praises sung by an Orlando Furioso as Sir Wm Stewart said of his brother on a celebrated occasion.

I heard from home after the Minister of Foss had called at Milton my father continues quite strong I am indeed sorry for poor old Findynate. I beg you will present my kindest respects to Mrs Irvine. Yours most truly James Robertson

I am this morning favored with yours of the 1st enclosing Nineteen Receipts and Bills, and vouchers of the payments made by Messrs Eccles & Co. Their list is now fully vouched and I think little farther is required by me to enable me to make out a full report on David's affairs, excepting some explanations regarding the payments made by you for the years 1839-40 which are taken credit for in David's books; and as to these, I now remember that you referred me to his old clerk to whom I will probably make application in the course of a few days.

Yours very truly James Robertson

We have a fierce storm of snow and frost; but this afternoon it begins to freshen I think.

The Procurator for the Church and Sheriff of Berwick is dangerously ill of typhus. It was said in the Parliament House to day that he could not recover; then hey for Sandy Dunlop!

Archy McNeill says that Moillegible has cut the wild men.

We are to have a small select Clan Dinner on Saturday the young Chief in the chair. My sister Emily came in here from Glasgow on Monday and remains with us for a week or ten days.

Postmarked: 'MAR H 12 M 1844' and 'TOBERMORY Millegible 1844'. Price: One Penny Postage Stamp. Seal: Black wax shield. Addressed to: 'The Revd A. R. Irvine Manse of Blair Blair Athole'.

Tobermory 9th March 1844

My dear Irvine,

I return you many thanks for the great quantity of news of every description contained in your letter of the 24th February. Your marriages are proceeding apparently at an equal rate in Atholl with ours in Argyllshire. No class or condition of life is exempt from the matrimonial mania with us at present high and low, rich and poor fall alike into the trap, and the Ministers of every denomination can hardly keep up with the ardour of their people in pronouncing the nuptial benediction indeed there are many, I grieve to say, who are too impatient to wait for it but that is very wrong; and we discountenance such proceedings on all hands as far as lies in our power.

The Clergy however have great disputes among themselves on this same subject of Marriage I mean the Established and Free Ministers. The Establishment men are pricked in conscience to see the Frees coupling parties in the most irregular and improper manner, two or three pairs at a time, simul et semel, without proclamation of bans in the "Paroch Kirk" as required by the Statutes thereanent provided; and they invite me to institute a rigid enquiry into the matter and to inflict the utmost censures and penalties of the law upon the transgressors. The Frees again throw out a high defiance to King and Kaiser, Minister, Sheriff and Sheriff Officer they do not know the law, and they do not care for it they are free

"as free as nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran"

And so being free themselves they argue that they may bind their flocks at pleasure, and they do it. My old friend Dr McArthur is vexed to the heart by their conduct, and told me the other day the Revd Peter Maclean had clearly rendered himself liable to be "banished and exiled"; and gave me a quiet hint that something was expected at my hands. At the same time he loudly disclaimed all vindictive motives "God forbid that he should harbour resentment against the poor creatures" but while the honest gentleman made these honest protestations it was evident that in his secret soul he thought that Mr Peter would not, in old Braxfield's phrase, "be the waur o' a hanging".

While the Clergy were quarrelling about the forms, there was a pause in the celebration of marriages, but the Christian people were determined to have the substance, and accordingly there were two serious cases of assault with a criminal intent within the week, so serious that I feel myself compelled to report them to the Circuit Court of Justiciary. Now, upon the whole I prefer Peter's irregular marriages to such practices as these, and I will therefore address him as Master Elbow did the clown "see what has become of thee now thou art to continue thou varlet, thou art to continue".

Dewar of Salen came down to me the other day with this complaint The Frees teach their followers that the children of the Devil are known to them by outward visible signs, or in other words by head mark, from the Elect Dewar, greatly scandalized at hearing of such doctrines being publicly propounded in his Parish, preached a Sermon from St John X 27 demonstrating that God alone knoweth and judgeth the heart. A Free Dominie of the name of McColl boiling over with zeal loudly proclaimed throughout the country side that in this matter Mr Dewar was teaching what he was pleased to call "the Devil's doctrine". Dewar burning with rage at being bearded by this ignorant creature, came down as I said post haste to me to advise and consult how he might take the law of the rogue. I told him that the man deserved to be burnt at the stake at the very least, but that he was a poor wretch utterly unworthy of his D's consideration that this was a matter of opinion on points of speculative doctrine as to which our laws were shamefully loose and lenient and juries proverbially intractable and that upon the whole my advice to him was to go home and revise his sermon, and preach it over again and handle the disputed argument with such irresistible force of reasoning as would demolish the Dominie root and branch. He did not relish this counsel at all at the first blush but he is a nice little fellow and a sensible, and upon farther consideration "he did as he was bid" I have not seen him since, but I have no doubt he has been down upon Mr McColl in thunder and lightning and extinguished him utterly.

A Mr Robert Stewart from Callander has been appointed to Acharacle and gives great satisfaction. This Presbytery are about to present Colin MacVean the right having devolved upon them to Strontian upon the unanimous requisition of the adhering Parishioners. Last Sunday week Colin preached his first Trial Sermon there, and his brother Donald went the same day and preached to the Frees of the place outside!! This little incident is making some noise among us I was told of it both by Donald and again by Colin, so there can be no doubt of the fact. Our new minister has not arrived and it is a very great mistake in him to absent himself at this crisis.

Gregor MacGregor Lismore has become bankrupt and his debts are said to be £1500! I believe however that he has been involved in some bill transactions by his wife's relation Captain Ross, Lord

Robertson's brother in law. I observed from certain indications in the Small Debt Court at Oban that poor Gregor's affairs were not in a prosperous state, but I certainly did not expect this public exposure so soon

Lord Breadalbane's presentee to Kilbrandon, Mr McNaughton, is to be rejected His Lordship's conduct in regard to the Church in Lorn is most abominable

You say you are thinking of launching a pamphlet against the Frees. Is it worth your while? Consider well first whether you are to do substantial good to the Church, and next whether you are to do good to yourself. Are you prepared to sacrifice ease, comfort and peace of mind by entering on the thorny paths of controversy? You see that I take the liberty of a very old friend but after all I do not know your provocation, plan or purpose, and my opinion is entitled to no weight. Thus far however I would venture to advise you very decidedly publish anonymously; and after, acknowledge or not as you see cause.

You are at perfect liberty to make what use you will of the story of old MacKinnon's marriage and death only my name must not appear, or can be guessed at. I am here in trust for both parties to arbitrate fairly between Trojan and Tyrean, and must shew no leaning towards one "party" deleted side more than another this is necessary, just and proper; and it is also politic You would be surprised to see the Frees, even the very Ministers, come to me for assistance and advice in all their difficulties Being a prelatist they look upon me as Father Fasidessic did on Dugald Dalgetty I suppose, and think it of little consequence whether I go to their own Tabernacle or to the Church. I will here give you the dry bones of MacKinnon's story so as to prevent all mistakes.

John MacKinnon Feuar in Tobermory, a widower and an old and infirm man with a grown up family, lived alone here in the village, his daughters he had no sons being all either married or out at service. He paid his addresses to a buxom and able bodied widow under the age of 40, who contrary to the advice of her friends demurred to accept of his offer. Old John belonged to the Established Church, and the widow to the Free, and at last after much importunity she consented to marry him on condition that he renounced the Church and joined the Secession. The man agreed though with much reluctance, but the Widow still put him off, and insisted on his settling his whole means on her, to the prejudice of his family and creditors. The infatuated creature agreed to this also; and on a Monday he signed two documents prepared by a friend of the widow, a young man who had been bred in a writer's office, and is an active member of the Free Kirk. The one document purports to be a Contract of Marriage, though in reality it was a unilateral deed executed by McKinnon alone, and by which he conveyed his house or Feu to the widow The other writing was a bill granted by him in the woman's favor, on payment of which by his heirs the house would revert to them. The sum in this bill was about equal to the value of the house.

On the same Monday, MacKinnon was taken dangerously ill; the widow came to live with him and they both sent for the Revd Peter Maclean Free Minister to perform the ceremony of marriage between them. Mr Maclean declined, partly on the ground that he himself felt unwell that night and did not like to go out, and partly because the bridegroom was unwell and confined to bed.

On Tuesday Morning another messenger was sent for Mr McLean, and he again declined to marry a man who was bedridden but on being informed that MacKinnon had got out of bed that day he agreed and he appointed another couple who were about to be married "shortly" deleted to meet him with their friends at MacKinnon's house at a certain hour so that one ceremony might answer for both couples. This arrangement was actually carried through the poor old man was taken out of bed and dressed his house was taken possession of and crowded by the two marriage parties he looked deadly sick and haggard and was partly supported during the ceremony when it was over the company sat down to eat bread and cheese and drink whiskey and kept him sitting with them for an hour or two until at last he begged of them for God's sake to leave him alone They did so and he was carried to bed and never left it again Towards evening the bride, by way of consummating the marriage, went in to bed with him, when the dying creature made use of the expression I mentioned in my last letter, viz. "thou calf of my heart, my only regret is that I cannot turn round towards you" He died on Thursday.

I should have mentioned that a medical man was called in on Monday Evening, who at once declared that he was dying, and it was upon this that they applied to Mr Maclean to marry them. Mr Maclean was informed of the Doctor's opinion.

The widow claimed the house, but the writings were irregular and informal, and the matter was submitted to arbitration The decision of the Referee was that the debts and funeral expenses of the deceased should be paid in the first place and that the residue of the whole property should be divided among the widow and daughters, each daughter having an equal share with the widow. The latter openly

and boldly avowed that her object in marrying the old man was to obtain possession of his property; and she felt disappointed at the decision. The residue remaining after payment of the debts &c was a mere trifle. It only remains to be mentioned that the whole Free Church party in the village exulted loudly at having made a convert of old John MacKinnon in the manner I have described.

I am almost ashamed to send you this letter, but can truly say that when I began I had no intention of being so long winded. Pray revenge yourself by returning an answer twice as long. I am somewhat anxious to hear about my mother who it seems met with an accident on the 29th Ult. Will you mention what you know of this when you write. Say also how your own mother is keeping and remember me very kindly to her and William when you see them, most truly yours
James Robertson

NOTES

James Robertson wrote these two letters to Alexander Irvine, a staunch Minister of the Church of Scotland, at a time when the dust created by 1843's explosive Disruption of the Church had not yet settled. In the first thirty years of the 19th century the Evangelical wing of the Church of Scotland had grown in power and influence, eventually achieving a majority in the General Assembly. They asserted the rights of the people and of Christ over the patrons usually landowners and gentry and the State. In 1834 the General Assembly passed a Veto Act giving congregations the right to reject a "nominee", that is to say, a new Minister nominated in the established way. The rights of patrons had been re-established by statute in 1712. The General Assembly's attempt to replace them with the rights of congregations was in due course declared unlawful by the Courts of Session, as conflicting with laws made by Parliament. The House of Lords upheld this decision. Clash was thus inevitable. Nominees were rejected by congregations and by the Church. In 1843, led by Thomas Chalmers, two-fifths of the ministers of the Church of Scotland walked out of the General Assembly and set up a Free Church. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the extent and depth of the bitterness that followed, especially in many parts of the Highlands, where defection to the Free Church was almost complete. But, under various pressures, the conflict gradually subsided. In the 1890s and early 1900s the old divisions were evidently closing but several small remnants of purists stood out; prominent among these were congregations, mostly in the Highlands but also elsewhere, including the so-called Wee Frees. The vast majority of Presbyterians were left in two main blocks. They repaired the old Disruption when the Free Church and the Church of Scotland were reunited in 1929.

It is interesting to note that in his second paragraph James Robertson uses the phrase "King and Kaiser" at a time when the word "kaiser" denoted a German Emperor some time before there was a Kaiser in a united Germany. But the term was widely used for German monarchs, even petty ones, in the 18th century.

It is also an indication of the general level of education among men brought up in early nineteenth century Perthshire that a suitable quotation from Dryden came to his mind as a matter of course when writing to a friend. The same is true of the quotation from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* referring to Master Elbow, who is a character in that play.

On second thoughts, this is an insufferably patronising opinion of our forebears, who were certainly subjected to a rigorous education at the hands of local schoolmasters who were almost all University graduates. Added to this, JR and ARI were themselves University graduates, products of the period immediately following the great enlightenment. This paragraph has been inserted in these notes as a penance. I hope the ghosts of our forebears can be bothered to read it and forgive my presumption.

The reference to the famous judge Lord Braxfield Robert MacQueen 1722-1799 is perhaps more likely to be expected. His title dated from his appointment in 1776 as a Lord of Session. He was promoted to Lord of Justiciary in 1780 and in 1788 became Lord Justice Clerk, an office roughly comparable with that of Lord Chief Justice in England. His name and reputation as a "hanging judge" was very familiar to all educated Scots at that time and is of course well remembered by most of their successors to day, especially but not only by lawyers.

It seems that James Robertson was himself an Episcopalian and therefore equally available to advise members of the Established Church and members of the Free Church. Hence his comparison of himself with Father Fatsides, whose humorous name he seemed to have failed to appreciate, rendering it as "Fasides". The reference is to Chapter Two of Sir Walter Scott's "A Legend of Montrose" the full relevance of which justifies an extended quotation. The following exchange is shown as taking place between Captain Dugald Dalgetty and Lord Menteith when the former is giving an account of his service in the Spanish army.

"I found, in short, that although my being a Protestant might be winked at, in respect that I was a man of action . . . yet, when in garrison, it was expected I should go to mass with the regiment. Now, my lord, as a true Scottish man, and educated at the Mareschal College of Aberdeen, I was bound to uphold the mass to be an act of blinded papistry and utter idolatry, whilk I was altogether unwilling to homologate by my presence. True it is, that I consulted on the point with a worthy countryman of my own, one Father Fatsides, of the Scottish Convent in Wurtzburg"

"And I hope," observed Lord Menteith, "you obtained a clear opinion from this same ghostly father?"

"As clear as it could be," replied Captain Dalgetty, "considering we had drank six flasks of Rhenish, and about two mutchkins of Kirchen-wasser. Father Fatsides informed me, that, as nearly as he could judge for a heretic like myself, it signified not much whether I went to mass or not, seeing my eternal perdition was signed and sealed at any rate, in respect of my impenitent and obdurate perseverance in my damnable heresy".

Postmarked: 'APR A 2 M 1844'. Price: One Penny Stamp. Seal: none. Addressed to: 'The Revd Alex R Irvine Manse of Blair Blair Athole'. Tobermory 30th March 1844

My dear Irvine

I was much obliged by your kind attention in writing about my mother's health I agree with you in thinking that she did not break any of her ribs and I hope that by this time she is completely recovered.

Your account of the circumstances that induced you to think of putting forth a pamphlet on the subject of Free Church tactics completely alters my opinion and obviates all the objections that occurred to me against your publishing. I will now be very glad to hear that you fire a shot into the centre of their camp, and the sooner the better. Indeed if you do not do it soon the time will be past.

I could give you a hundred illustrations of their scandalous mode of procedure in those parts. As this: Mr Ross our Presentee was expected to arrive some three weeks since and he received an anonymous communication while yet in Glasgow stating that his congregation would consist of four individuals. The first time he preached there were upwards of 400 in the Church! He was reported to be an able and popular Minister, and the alarmed Free Church Man of God addressed an influential parishioner who he believed to have been favorable to the Seceders thus "Well! the new Minister is expected by the steamer this week" Yes "I think the people should meet him on the Quay and give him a good ducking, or at least turn him back again!" The man demurred to this Christian proposition, and afterwards spoke openly of it The story spread like wild fire, and the Revd Peter got somewhat alarmed what effect it might produce he called on old Sandy, and offered to take him aside to to speak to him. Sandy declined a private conference, with "Whatever you have to say to me Sir, say it before my neighbours". "Well then Sandy I am told that you are giving out that I said Mr Ross should be ducked" &c. "Do you mean to deny that you did" retorted Sandy, "you cannot safely do so Mr Maclean, there were too many people present as" so and so and so "Oh! I don't deny it Mr Maclachlan but I merely joked!, and I did not think you would have publicly talked of what I said!!".

I said that Mr Ross preached to upwards of 400 the first Sunday he was in Tobermory the people were delighted with him, and the next Sunday the Church was still more crowded than before This put the Free Kirkers frantic - they gave only and still give out that the new Minister has just two Gaelic and two English discourses which he has been conning for the last six months - that he is not spiritual or Evangelical, or godly or holy but all in vain. The Call was to be moderated on Tuesday last, and Peter himself took the field in person, went from house to house, and entreated, exhorted and even threatened the moderates with damnation if they signed it the words 'the Call' deleted. He told them emphatically that "every person who goes to that Church to day builds an eternal wall between himself and Christ"! On the previous Sunday evening he raved like a bedlamite called the Church "up the brae" the "Kirk of Satan", its Minister "a limb of Satan" its congregation "the Children of Perdition" and so forth, until at last he had his own chosen vessels howling like maniacs whenever there was an outbreak of this kind, he paused in his exclamations, and said "There! the evil spirit is busy among us. There! we are pricking him lo! we are sending the fiend out from among us". A moderate or two who went in from curiosity afterwards said that their flesh crept upon their bones at hearing such blasphemous ravings. You think that the man who is capable of acting such a part is contemptible, and to be sure in a certain sense he is but he is also mischievous - at least he is mischievous in the meantime Weak women and weaker men are led astray

even by him tho I acknowledge that his intemperate conduct is likely in the end to bring discredit upon himself and his cause even in the eyes of these poor fanatics who now think him a demigod.

This is a very small sample of Free Kirk doings at Tobermory - at Strontian the man McIntyre is still more violent and virulent than Peter Maclean, and still more contemptible in point of arguments and talents At ?Trosay Mr Shaw is as violent as either of his said compears, and more foolish than both put together. At Oban the same spirit manifests itself more skilfully perhaps, but at the same time more viciously While at ?Farhorn they appear to be going on much as we are doing here. The Free Kirk ministers and lay leaders are every where bad and I would say wholly regardless of good principle and good feeling the Free people are partly fanatical, partly ignorant, and partly indifferent and leaning to Moderatism These last will soon come over, especially as they do not at all relish the frequent contributions that are now levied upon them, one day in money and another in the shape of Fowls, eggs, potatoes and the like Believe me that this will not last.

Such is an imperfect and hasty glance of the state of Free Kirkism with us in Argyll but Mr Ross tells me things of Ross and Sutherland that make me open my eyes and uplift my hands and cry out Allah Kerim! When I have time I may give you some account of how matters were managed in those counties how whole Parishes went out in the gross imagining that they still remained in the Church of Scotland How many Ministers and more Students were put out of the Church upon moral compulsion against their own clear convictions how those on seceding joined with the old Frees in persecuting those that still adhered and how the mob threatened the lives, and the Free Kirk, aye and the High Church party before the disruptions, virtually excommunicated and put under the ban of the Church every student that maintained moderate opinions But to pass from the north to the south and west On Tuesday last Mr Ross' call was moderated; John Macleod presided and delivered a magnificent Gaelic discourse the best I ever heard and a pretty good English one The people actually rushed to the Table to subscribe the Call, and the names of 100 heads of families, and several others besides, were adhibited in the course of a few minutes More have subscribed since and the Moderates go about boasting that we have got a better Minister than the Frees It is but fair to the Church party in this Presbytery generally to say that there is no ill will or malice manifested by them towards their opponents notwithstanding the great provocation they received at their hands.

On Wednesday our Presbytery inducted Mr Stewart at Acharichle to an unanimous and satisfied congregation No Frees there On Thursday the adhering congregation of Strontian gave a harmonious call to Colin MacVean - 50 heads of families subscribed in the Church, and others have done so since, and are doing so now. The Iona people are well pleased with Mr McGregor.

Thus you see that our Vacancies at Iona, Tobermory, Acharicle and Strontian are all well and satisfactorily filled or in the course of being filled Peter McIntyre Kenmore is talked of for Ulva - but I fear that not one, or at least that but a very few will give him a Call mais nous verrons. Stewart of Kinlochspeloe?, a Callender man, is presented by the Duke of Argyle to Ardnamurchan - and there will be opposition there too I hope that Mr Stewart may soon be able to overcome it, as tho' not a popular preacher, he bears in other respects the character of a good Minister and an excellent plain man.

Ross of Tobermory is a popular preacher, decidedly so, and as I think a very amiable and good fellow - modest and quiet, but at the same time firm Should he fault he'll prop him up and lend him every support in our power. I quote your conduct and management of your people to him and to them all, as a model for them to follow. For myself I entirely coincide in your views and opinions.

What is this we hear of the Free Minister of Dunkeld that was. Pray let me have your version of the story and give me your other news besides.

Yesterday and to day the weather is delicious; spring and summer in one united blaze of sunshine. Remember me to and among your parishioners - and with very kind regards to the old Lady at Cluny and William. I remain most truly yours James Robertson

NOTES 'The Call' was and for all I know may still be today 'an invitation to the pastorate of a congregation' Chambers in the Church of Scotland; when such a call was 'moderated' it meant that a church court, presided over by a moderator, confirmed the invitation and ratified the appointment of of the invited man as minister of that congregation.

N. N. W. Showers - ugly day. Called on W H F and talk about illegible and Tait's funds. Walked to Heathery quay ?. Went in Evening to hear Mr Watson lecture on the atmosphere, on returning home I found Letters from Emily - all well in Edinburgh, and George out of danger - and from A.R.I. announcing the death of his wife and my cousin Sophia Stewart Robertson of Kindrochet. Poor, poor Sophy! She and her mother and her husband did not behave well to our family, and I think that she felt this and keenly regretted the consequent estrangement that has taken place between us. I do not blame her; and I wish from my heart that I had seen her before her death. Dear Sophy, I loved her for her father's sake - I like her mother too - God help her - As for her husband, I cannot esteem the man. And this is the end of Sophy Kindrochet whose prospects at one time promised so fairly, so brightly. It wrings my heart to think of it all.

NOTES

James Robertson wrote the following words in the margin of his diary entry for Friday 25 Jan 1856 "My Cousin Sophy Kindrochet died this day". Sophia Stewart Robertson of Kindrochet, otherwise Mrs A R Irvine, had been born in February 1821; the only child of Duncan Robertson of Kindrochet and his wife Sophia, daughter of Donald Stewart of Shierglass, she married in September 1844, as his second wife, the Revd Alexander Robertson Irvine, Minister of Blair Atholl. James Robertson and Sophy were first cousins because his mother, Margaret Robertson, who married Duncan Robertson, Milton of Invervack, had been the sister of her father Duncan Robertson of Kindrochet.

Emily was James Robertson's sister. The identity of George remains unknown but it sounds as if he was a member of the family.

A.R.I. was, of course, Sophy's husband; the use of his initials is a reminder of the close acquaintance of two men who, in the early 1840s and before, wrote to one another and gave the appearance at that time of being on friendly terms.

We do not yet know what lay behind the remark that Sophy, her mother and her husband "did not behave well to our family". It may have been a particular incident or a general attitude or, more likely, a combination of them with an underlying issue, such as disagreements about the disposition of property or the sharing of an inheritance. It sounds as if the resulting estrangement was between James and Sophy as individuals; but it may have been between the Kindrochet and Invervack families. Sophy's husband was very probably a main source of trouble; it may have been that there was general dismay in her family that she made the mistake of marrying a widowed middle-aged Minister with little or no private means; or he may have taken an unwisely active part in Kindrochet family business. In any event James Robertson did not like or trust him, as is clearly shown by the quiet candour and moderation of what he wrote in his diary.

The words "God help her" after the reference to Sophy's mother require a little explanation. Sophia Stewart, Mrs Robertson of Kindrochet, was then aged about 76. She was landed with keeping house for her son-in-law at the Manse and with supervising the care and upbringing of his six surviving children. Betsey, his daughter by his first marriage, Sophy's step-daughter, was aged 21; Sophia, Sophy's eldest child, was aged 10; Alistair, her eldest son, the eventual heir to Kindrochet, was aged 8; the remaining three children were Clementina, aged 6, Duncan, aged 4 and Robert, aged 2. It may be assumed that the youngest child, Jane, born in November 1855, was already dead by the time Sophy died or not long after. What became of these children may be seen in the IRVINE NARRATIVE GENEALOGY.

In the entry for Thursday 31 Jan 1856, James Robertson records in his diary that he wrote to "The Revd A. R. Irvine, Blair Atholl about his wife's death" and that he wrote to "Aunt Betsey, Kindrochet Cottage about Ditto".

James Robertson's diary is now 1995 in the possession of his great-grandson Duncan Robertson. It consists of five volumes, covering the following years respectively: I 1838-1847; II 1847-1853; III 1853-1857; IV 1858-1866; V 1866-1875.

To THE MISSES ROBERTSON Kindrochet. Kirkwall 25th Jany 1859 My dearest Aunts

You will hardly be prepared for the news I am about to communicate to you. I am at last about to change my condition.

I have been engaged for some time to Miss Harriet Logie daughter of the late Dr Logie of Isbister, first Minister of Kirkwall. She is between thirty and forty years of age, and I have known her and her family ever since I came to Orkney thirteen years ago. So far as I can judge she is good tempered, prudent & sensible; & I hope I may be able to say the same with more certainty five years hence. In appearance she is not unlike Grace Anne Findynate. Last Summer she visited at Dirnanean and went with the Smalls to Blair Atholl. That family can tell you her character with more impartiality than I can be expected to do.

I am to write to George, to Findynate, & to Struan or his mother to day. My brothers and Emily already know the circumstance.

I have said that I am to change my condition, but I hope you will always find that my feelings towards you will never change, & that I shall ever be, as I now am

Your most affectionate nephew James Robertson

Postmarked: 'KIRKWALL JA 15 1860' and 'BLAIR ATHOLL JA 20 1860' on the back of a small envelope. Price: One Penny Stamp. Seal: none, but sealed with embossed paper wafer. Addressed to: 'Miss Robertson Kindrochet Cottage Blair Atholl'. Kirkwall 14th Jany 1860

My dearest Aunt Betsey I have the gratification of informing you that my wife was this day safely delivered of a fine stout boy, and that both she & the child are doing remarkably well. They all tell me that the boy is like Emily & myself and I see "Milton" written in every line of its little face, but which of the Miltons he resembles most, I cannot say.

Pray inform Mrs Robertson and the family at the Manse of the event with my kind love. The mail does not go out from Orkney until Monday morning, and I will add a P.S. to my letter to morrow night before it is posted. Meantime I remain with dearest love in which Harriet cordially joins Your ever affectionate nephew James Robertson

P.S. Sunday Evening Harriet & the child I am thankful to say are strong & well I propose to name him "Duncan John"

o THE MISSES ROBERTSON Kindrochet. Kirkwall 19th April 1861 Friday

My dear Aunts I am sure that you will feel interested to know that my wife was this morning safely delivered of a daughter, and that both she and the child are doing well. The little thing is not so large as his brother was but she is still a well sized infant, and apparently healthy. Her hair and complexion are fair and she promises to turn out a pretty child; but you will say that I am not a good judge of these things, and neither I am.

I have a good deal of business to attend to, to day, & have not time to work a long letter but I will soon write you again.

We hear that Bessy Irvine is about to be married. I had a letter from her father lately, & he says nothing of the subject. Is the story true?

The weather is beautiful, & spring labour nearly finished in Orkney. Harriet joins me in kindest love. I remain My dear Aunts most affectionately yours James Robertson

To ELIZABETH gka BETSEY or BESSIE ROBERTSON Kindrochet. Kirkwall 8th May 1861
My dearest Aunt Betsey

I duly received Aunt Anne's very kind letter, and both Harriet and myself feel extremely gratified by the affectionate interest you express in her recovery, and for her little daughter's health & welfare.

I am glad to say that she and the child continue to do well. She herself has been going about the house as usual for the last three or four days; and we propose to have the Christening this week before Mr William Logie goes south to preach in his new Parish.

The name is to be Elizabeth, that being the name of old Mrs Logie, and it has an additional claim upon me as being yours also. She is a healthy and thriving baby. Duncan is a strong good tempered little fellow, and much improved in appearance He is still extremely fond of his wee sister.

We propose going to our former summer quarters, in June for the benefit of country air, and if at all possible I will take a run to see you & the Banchors in July. We were grieved to hear from Jane that poor John had met with an accident and hurt his knee, and feel very anxious to hear again that he is recovering. I hope from my heart that the injury is not serious.

John wrote me lately that he had been over in Athole, and that he saw Margaret Dalchalloch on her way to visit you. If she is still with you, will you remember me affectionately to her, & say that I never hear or think of any of her family without a feeling of kindness.

I am very sorry that you yourself do not feel strong at present, but I hope that the coming summer will bring you renewed health and strength and that I may soon see my dear dear Aunt Betsey herself again. God grant that it may be so. Be assured that you are both very often in my thoughts, and that not a day passes over my head without bringing many recollections of Kindrochet & Milton, and of those who so long endeared them to me.

Pray thank Aunt Anne from me for all her pleasant news. I had a letter from the Minister the other day in which he writes freely of every thing but his daughter's marriage, to which he does not refer..

Remainder of letter missing