

Addressed to: (James Johnston & family, Quebec)

From: David Geddes, Stromness

Stromness 11th Febr^y 1785

Dear Friends

I had the pleasure to receive your favour of the 4th Nov^r last and am very happy to learn you keep your health so well, and that matrimony agrees so well with my uncle.

I learn from report that his endeavours that way have been crowned with success & that my young aunt is in a fair way of giving him an heir. I sincerely wish her a happy time of it & I hope ere this gets to hand, they will be as happy as I am now with my young Ann of three weeks old, a fine little plump lass, & if my good friend does not find his lost rib before she is fit for business I will send her out to him. The night I returned home from London I found M^{rs} Geddes so well recovered that we got this one for that day nine months. She was delivered after only three hours labour. She is now recovering bravely & we mean to put another upon the stocks in a very few days. To provide for this increase I am going to try my fortune in the seas this summer in a very fine sloop I have got built at Leith of near 100 tons burden, all oak out & in fitted out in the best manner. She costs me near £800. I mean her to go on freight or force a trade from the Baltic or Norway to Liverpool or Irel^d. This and the fishing is all I can attempt in this country and I find I cannot prevail on M^{rs} Geddes and my friends here to let us quit it. I might let fate take its own way with me, for it will never let me have mine. I am now becoming reconciled to it.

I have put a youth of 21 in master of this sloop. He is a brother in law of mine, who has taken to himself a wife at those years, being determined not to lose any time. My cousin Polly Johnston has got married to a young batchelor, a M^r Hood, at Edinburgh only a little more than 50, & Peggy M^cKay as reported here says is to be married to another not quite so young. I am glad to learn you have so good crops and that you have got rid of your Dutch Governor. From what I can learn I fancy he will have his hands full at London. I hear your old friend Sir Guy is to return. These great men are but very small in London where they are all party mad, without any regard to the good of the country or colonies. Every one for himself in all lines I believe to be the ruling passion of the present times. I learn my friend M^r Jordan is purchasing away the land. What he has got are good I know them well. I am waiting for an opportunity of laying out a small sum in that way here; much contrary to my wishes but so it must be, the money has been lying for some time in bankers hands at Edinburgh for which I only get 4 pc^t int^t. My brother writes me from New York to bring the sloop out full of men & women servants for sale which I believe would answer well but it's a business I do not much like. I am sorry Mr Todd would not take better care of the news papers there were a good number of them well put up and contained the most interesting debates. If ever I should see him again, I'll let him hear me, as I think he has behaved very dirtily in keeping them up.

All friends here are well; jogging on in the usual way. I beg to be kindly remember'd to my aunts and all friends with you & am with best respects to my fair aunt,

dear friends, yours most sincerely

Da^d Geddes

Mrs Geddes desires her good wishes