

Addressed to: (James Johnston, Quebec)

From: Joshua Johnston, Stromness

Stromness 9th April 1784

Dear Brother

I have yours of the 24th Octo^r last welcoming me to the assistance you had given me & acquainting me that as you had placed my son in a good employ, referred me for help to him in future and had withdrawn yours, as you had recovered your health and had lately married a young lady of taste agreeable to you.

I sincerely wish you and your spouse all the joy and happyness your married state can afford and return you thanks for your favours to me and for your goodness to my son, and your good opinion of him, and rejoice in the recovery of your health.

Doubtless you feel with yourself how such an unexpected event as your marriage must affect me, every thing considered, especially the great inequality of the match, the disproportion of age, an old man indulgin himself in love & a young lady of taste to love an old man, is something extraordinary. It will be incumbent upon you both to act the most prudent part to maintain your own happyness, to balance all differences by greater virtues, to secure the approbation of all your real friends and good people our concerns. This will make all agreeable and pray God it may be so.

Your assistance to me on several former occasions was the greatest of the kind I ever experienced and the most suitable to my occasions. I shall ever gratefully remember it. But are there no other reasons than those you assign for your withdrawing your aid so suddenly on the very dawn of such events, and when it was expected and I depended so much upon it. These questions may naturally occur to yourself as they do to me and it is you only that upon reflection can resolve them. I hope our mutual affection and esteem for each other as bretheren is still intire and will be so while we are open to each other and unprejudised by others. The free disposal of your own subject is certainly optional to yourself but I still claim a share of your affection and feel for your happiness as my own.

I have laboured almost all my lifetime under a load of almost all the hardships of adverse fortune & nothing added more to my affliction than the frowns of some of my own friends, which I am conscious to myself I never deserved. But kind providence still wonderfully supported me and made you one great instrument of my comfort. I wish I had the opportunity of disembosoming myself to you upon this and other subjects.

Your nephew Crafts M^cKay is here. I seed your last letter to him which affected him much. I can with assurance say he is quite well affected to his relations. He is rather thought to intent and active in his profession & every other way wears a good character. He intends going to Boston in order to push his fortune. We should endeavour rather to cherish than to wound youth in their sensibility and especially when they claim our

advice and should even temper that with delicacy otherways it may lower both themselves and us in their esteem and wavering in their resolutions and make them regardless when they think us froward.

He has rec^d orders from a Cap^t Dickie to make a gold watch for your young wife. It would certainly have come better from yourself or her directly to himself. This gentleman takes upon him, notwithstanding your discretionary orders, to prescribe both the price and the work and so means to share in the mouter (*fee*) of the whole with you both, besides being thought more frugal. But Crafts is determined to be only directed by yourself and by his own honour tho the order comes thro such a channel which I hope you will think commendable in him. We should be cautious of allowing others to help into the decorum due to ourselves. That would render them more assuming as they may think us silly. I dare say your own line from the root upwards & all the branches of it are as hon^{ble} blessed with as happy genius as any, but are rather too unsuspecting.

My son is dependant upon you and I hope he will endeavour to merit your favours. You are as a parent to him and the rank he stands in with you claims your consideration next to your own offspring if you are so happy as to be blessed with any. I thank God I have brought up a large family as genteelly as any in this place and keep credit while others of much greater fortunes have spent the whole stock & all. I have indeed sold good part of my subject and most of the rest under mortgage. I hope my son will assist me to releev it when he is able and I have no doubt of his inclination. All had been gone had you not assisted me.

I rec^d your partner's letter with the current account of our dear deseased brother's estate. I acquainted his widow of it & I hope we will settle matters amicably. What I am due to you and our brother's heirs is £100 St^g to each of you inserted by your own hand in your disposition to me of our father's subject with interest since our mother's death, besides provisions to my sisters which I have never been able fully to pay, and neither have you made demands upon me which I must acknowledge as really charitable.

David Geddes is at London & writes to his wife that he has wrote to his friends in Quebec. All friends here are in their ordinary health. My dau^r Kathⁿ intends going to Edn^r the first occasion in order to try to recover the sight of one of her eyes. Her sister Mally to goe with her by the advice of Dr Groat in Kirk^l w^t a letter of recommendation to Dr Monro in Edn^r. This will need money as she wrote you & partner to remit p^r and to have your order to draw for the rest. She means to assist me a little in case my son is not able at present & to lay out her money in purchase of a piece of land in the country when she can have a good offer of a place to her liking. All my houses except that I live in are in a ruinous condition & I unable to repair them. I could give you other instances of my want of money but refere you to my letter to my son. I find old age advances fast and unable to do anything but write treatises on stones & the form & constitution of this earth. I hope to perform this last before I leave it & have the assurance of a better world.

My wife & family join in our affectionate compliments to you & your spouse. Wishing you joy and all the comforts of your married state. I am your affectionate brother

Joshua Johnston