

Addressed to: Mr John Johnston at Mr Joshua Johnston's in Stromness, Orkney

From: *(not given)*

London Sep^{tr} 15th 1772

John Johnston

My Dear Nephew

With great pleasure I received your letter by Mr Ross about a month ago, and hope that you have by your diligent attention made great improvements since it was wrote. I shall be glad to have another from you on receipt of this acquainting me what you have learned, & what you are learning & what you propose to learn. For know this that a man without education will cutt but a poor figure in the world, therefore youth being the time for education, in order to do justice to yourself you ought to apply diligence to what you are about, to learn as much usefull literature as possibly you can before that time which you must begin to aply to some kind of imployment to enable you to get a living in the world. And this opens a large field for your consideration. You are your father's only son but he has no estate to leave you, & if he had you ought to sett out in order to obtain what you can by your own honest industry. Beg of God to advise you & direct your mind to incline to that which is best, & that you may not incline to, nor sett about anything but what the Almighty will approve of. And whenever you are going to sett about any thing let this be your golden constant rule, i.e. say earnestly in your own mind, if it is right xxx grant that I may pursue & do it, but if it is wrong the Lord restrain me from it, and the Almighty will actually do so. For he will approve of your conduct, that you rely on him to bless your best endeavours, his restraining grace is the best protection of mankind, & in the course of your life if please God you are spared to act the man on this Earth, you will prove what I here assert to be true, & that you will be keep'd from doing things that you wished to do. And by your asking as above you being restrained from it & not doing it was the best for your good, & then you will naturally thank God that you did not do it. Think well of what I here advise & act accordingly & further you will consider that you are the only brother of several sisters. A man should have that nobleness of sentiment that he would raither wish to help than be helped & to obtain that power he must beg of God to advise him to pursue such means as may enable him & must be industrious, diligent & carefull. And let this be the moto of your actions, i.e. honesty is the best policy, and this be your rule, to do to others as you would that others should do by you. A tricking person may obtain wealth & emoluments for a while but God who loves the right and hates the wrong cannot approve of his ways & tho he may be consented (?) at for a while, we may often see the wretch pulled down and appear in his own colours (?) while the honest man enjoys a precious (?) satisfaction in his own actions tho not succeeding so well as the others. I would have you think & bend your mind to some business where you may have a chance to xxxxxx yourself. To prepare yourself for which, endeavour to spell well, to read distinctly, to write a good hand, & to dite xxxx well you must furnish your mind with knowledge which is obtained by your reading good instructive books, then good xxxent with good style will, like a spring, arise in the head

(?) & flow out to your own satisfaction & your pen will convey the like to those you correspond with who will esteem you for it as one capable. And you must learn to understand arithmetick well & likewise book-keeping all of which is requisite in a common sphere of life. The more compleat you are in this the more fitter, either for a mechanical trade or a merchants clark. To learn such like trading business & if you have a mind to go to sea, learn navigation also, together with what I have already mentioned, the whole being requisite in that way. & if you incline to be a doctor or a lawyer you must also learn Latin. Thus whatever business you incline to qualify yourself for, & this conclude that you must aply to some business or other. I would have your sentiments to be such that you will aspire to obtain a living for yourself & to be able to help your sisters. Your father, if he can spare a little to qualify you as above & help in obtaining a way to get a living is all that he can do. & for you to think of more will be mean in you which dependence you will repent as long as you live.

Therefore be diligent xxxxxxxxxxxx time you have on business to learn xxxxxxxxxxxx such of the above as you you must not think xxxxxx being at home. But yxx the blessing of God, with sentiments herebefore xx your fortune abroad consult your own inclinxxxx acquaint your father & friends, and that God xx protect you is the xxxxxx wish of

Dear Jxxxx

Your affectionate ...

Jn Johxxxxxx

Remember my love to your father & mother, grandmother, all your aunts & sisters. All here are well.

Write p^r post as soon as you receive this